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Myrtle Leaves

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Myrtle Leaves

IN

SPRING TIME;

OR

Early Friends and Friendships.

BY EMERALDA.

CINCINNATI:
PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH A HEMANN,
CATHOLIC TELEGRAPH OFFICE,
1863.

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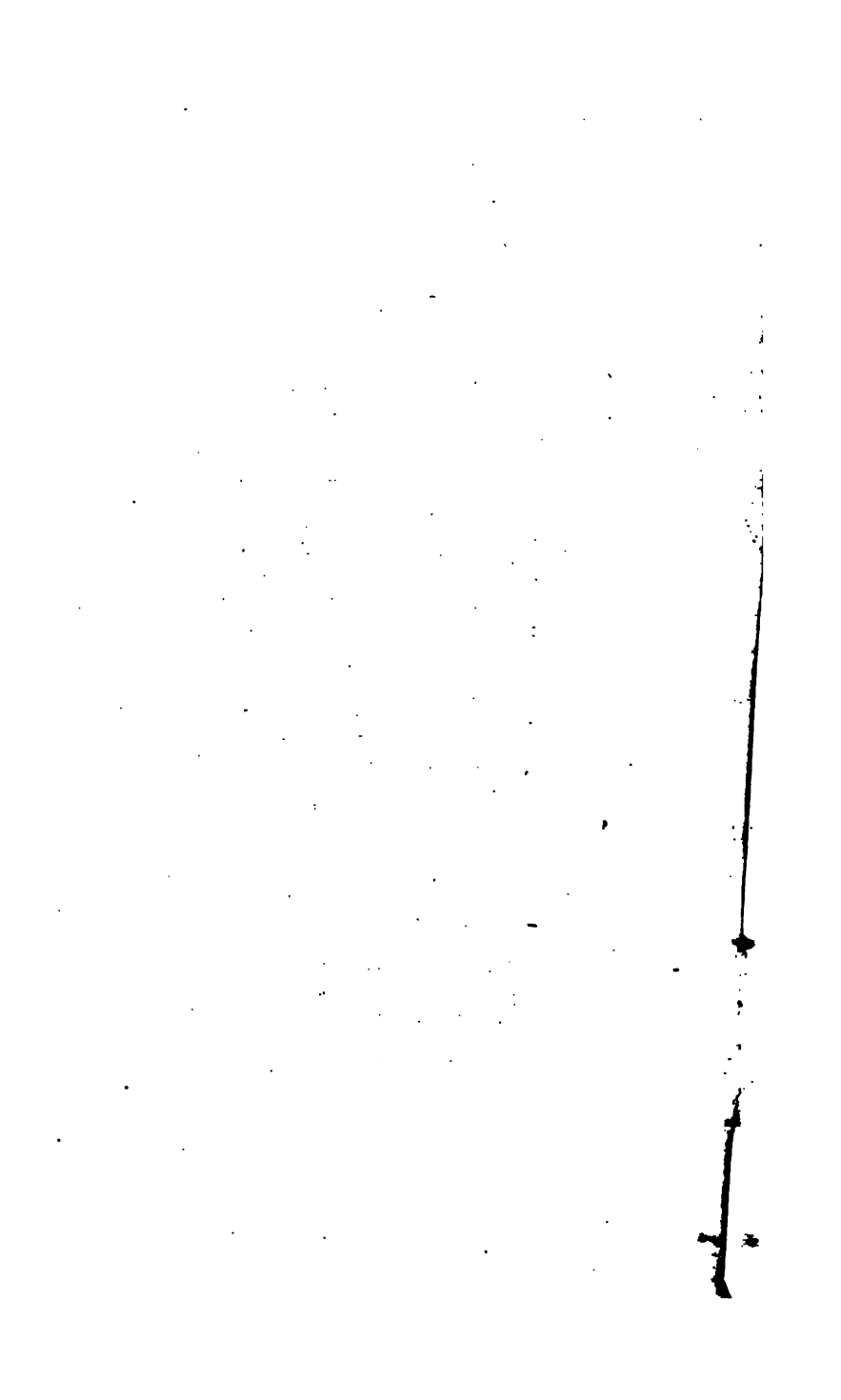
DEDICATION.

Mother of Jesus, Lily-spotless white,
Fair and unblemished as the virgin snow,
Full moon that shines upon our earthly night
Dethroning darkness by thy silver glow,—
The humble labor of my unskilled mind
With fear and trembling I present to thee;
The gift regard not, Lady, beauteous, kind,
But the intentions of the writer see.
I am thy daughter, Mother dearest, bless'd,
The fragile object of thy tender care;—
In grief or gladness, in exhaustion, rest,
My sweet Protectress, thou art always near.
Take then my offring, Virgin chastely meek,
And view my efforts with indulgent eye:
Oh, hear the voice of fond affection speak,
The words of gratitude ascend on high.
I would implore thee, olive-wreathed Queen,
To love, to cherish those who kindly led
My timid footsteps to the Muses' stream,
And o'er me Learning's priceless mantle spread.
My friends and comrades, silver Star of Eve,
Illume and shelter 'neath thy fost'ring ray;
Their gentle soother be thou when they grieve,
And in joy's season light their summer way.
Let thy remembrance never leave our hearts,
Pure, guiding Beacon through this stormy sea,
And when the vital breath of life departs,
Our Jesus, Mother, we'll adore with thee.

EMERALDA.



PREFACE.

LINGARD having been asked to write a short preface for "The Protestant Apology," replied, that what Dr. Lanigan had handled so learnedly, he (Lingard) would not presume to touch. Whereupon the publisher, Mr. Coyle of Dublin, (from whom we have the anecdote,) had to hunt up and down for some literary Tom, Dick or Harry, to supply the want, as Dr. L.'s elaborate Introduction to the first edition is about *four* times the size of the work itself! Here is a warning to literary gardeners. How fortunate for the bashful cultivator of these sweet "Myrtle Leaves," that we do not possess the ability and bad taste of building a "dead wall" between their native fragrance and the sun!

How slyly we have been praising our little foster-child all this time, insinuating that it is "sweet" and "fragrant!" And is it not fragrant of pure Catholic sentiment, Catholic feeling, and Catholic association? This recommendation alone ought to make it welcome in every Catholic family. As the debut of a young lady, it will, we think, admit of favorable comparison with that of any lady writer we know. This is saying much, even though it be true, that of such first productions we know very few. At all events, the author has done her part, the publisher his, we ours, it remains now for the Catholic public to do theirs.

J. H. G.

CATHOLIC TELEGRAPH OFFICE,
Cincinnati, May, 1863.

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MYRTYLE LEAVES IN SPRING TIME;

OR,

EARLY FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIPS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

Fair Autumn, pure Autumn, Autumn declining,
Past beauty, past glory with old age combining,
Most welcome thy shades are—I cordially greet thee,
And with a wild wreath of sere leaves do I meet thee.
Thou com'st when the year by fleet Time is made hoary,
When Summer is singing her last lay of glory,
When skies become tinted with rich hues and purple,
And verdure alights on the late-blooming myrtle.

Evening was deepening into night, and the stars were beginning to reflect their silver discs in the waters of the beautiful Delaware. It was Indian Summer; a grey frost had crept along with the twilight, and a scene of hoary magnificence was presented to the eye of the admirer of beauty and grandeur. The river purled gently along, beating with a murmuring sound against the moss-covered banks; the bright, tall trees that waved above its margin looked down into the crystal flood and sighed, for their long, thin shadows revealed them to themselves in their fading, autumnal glory. Towards the west a few golden clouds might be descried, slightly edged with white and surrounded by dark, massive fringes, varying from an ashy brown to a midnight jet. There was a voice of melody ringing with plaintive thrillingness, through the sere, leaf-strewn forest—an attentive pause, and the listener was convinced that some belated birds were winging their flight to the South.

Midway between the city of Philadelphia and the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill was situated, at the time our narrative commences, a mansion of imposing appearance. A dense native wood stretched to the rear and partially

flanked its sides, while a beautifully undulating and well-trimmed lawn, found its devious way to the river. The surrounding country was in the highest state of cultivation. Orchards with their odoriferous burdens, perfumed the air in the spring-time, while in summer it rejoiced in the rich possession of meadows and ripened crops.

All around the mansion betokened luxury and taste. It was a princely house for an American, but the proud owner of Grosvenor Hall reckoned his descent from the nephew of William the Conqueror. It was neither a Gothic nor a Corinthian structure, but one which borrowed the beauty of both, and blended them into a tasteful unity. The tall, pointed spires were softened into round and inwrought columns, and the trim, aspiring arches subsided into a graceful and symmetrical repose. A flight of marble steps led the way to the main entrance, where an exquisitely oak-carved door admitted the applicant into the interior of the building.

We have said that the evening shades were thickening, and that a slight frost had descended and whitened the leaf-covered ground. Bright lights streamed from the windows of Grosvenor Mansion, and the cheerful blaze of the fire imparted a sensation of gladness to those situated within compass of its genial rays. Around it were seated, in divers positions, the members of the happy family. They were five in number. The father, Edward Grosvenor, a gentleman of Nature's making, reclined easily in his crimson-velvet arm-chair. He was then past the prime of manhood, but still lofty-looking and proud, with a dark, piercing and commanding eye. His black, glossy hair, besprinkled with grey, was smoothed back, revealing to advantage an intellectual brow. A glance at the man sufficed to impress you with the conviction that a determined will, softened by a natural kindness of heart, was his leading characteristic. On an ottoman by his side, his head resting on his knee, was his youngest son, Louis, a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired little fellow of scarcely seven springs. He was evidently reserved, although a sunny dimple habitually dwelt on his cheek. Opposite, in a cushioned rocking-chair, sat the lady of the house. It were no easy task to describe her, for she was neither singular nor common. She was habited in materials of the richest manufacture, but simplest make. Mildness and sweet persuasiveness were the dominant traits expressed by her eyes and mouth. Leaning against the mantle-peice, in a

half-reflective mood, was a fine youth, somewhere about twenty. He had his father's hair and eyes, only that the latter were softer, and much less penetrating in expression. There was, however, a great deal of haughtiness and firmness about his mouth; he was tall—in fact a handsome youth was the maturing Arthur Grosvenor.

Sitting next to her mother, with one hand supporting a meditative head, was the most striking personage of the group. Not that Ella Grosvenor was a technically beautiful girl:—no—but in her whole demeanor there was something sweetly attractive. Her eyes were large and coal-black, speaking, but of a decidedly pensive cast. Affection beamed from them, and they were perfect expounders of the thoughts of her soul. Her face was pale and fair, and rarely was a roseate tinge to be found upon her cheek. She was the possessor of a beautifully-chiseled Grecian nose. Thick, jetty ringlets flowed over her shoulders, partially covering her face, and making its natural pallor more apparent by the contrast. She was tall, too tall almost for a girl of fifteen, and too slender, a critic would say, in proportion to her height.

"Ella," said Mr. Grosvenor, his eye bent intently on the flickering blaze of the fire—Ella started as if from a revery, and placed herself in a listening attitude—"There are some very celebrated schools in Germany and France, but I prefer the former. What would you think of finishing your education in true and royal Germany?" A slight flush suffused her countenance, and looking imploringly at her parent, she replied:

"Germany! ah, father, do not crush my youthful hopes. You know that Belgium, rich in historic recollections, is the place selected by my heart. You know too, that Mary Kenselle, the friend of my childhood, is there, and that with her I would be less a stranger in a foreign land."

"But," objected the father, "there are certain considerations to be borne in mind. You understand perfectly, I imagine, that Belgium is almost exclusively a Catholic country, and that Germany has been illuminated by the light of the reformation. The pure faith of a Grosvenor might be in danger in the 'Garden of Europe,' because, my daughter, you are young, and, I must add, extremely susceptible."

"What," broke in Arthur vehemently, "do you suppose, dearest father, that if Ella were placed in the palace of Pius IX., she would yield the religion of her ancestors? No!—

thanks to the teachings of our parents and instructors, we have no fears on that point; but what thinks our mother of the proposed change?"

"If she must be sundered from her home and country, I am of the opinion that her own inclinations ought to be consulted,"—and the eye of the mother rested fondly on her child, whose fervid words, "thanks, my mother," sank like dew upon her heart.

"I have thought deeply on the subject already," Mr. Grosvenor rejoined, "but as there is no immediate prospect of your departure, I can reconsider it, of course. The Kensellas are undoubtedly fine people, but you must admit they are papists, of the most hopelessly decided character."

The attention of the party was here arrested by the rather loud breathings of Louis, and all eyes turning simultaneously, discovered him sound asleep upon his father's knee. "Sweet innocence," whispered the mother, as she knelt down and kissed his sunny brow, "little he dreams of the troubles or crosses of life." Arthur rang a silver bell, and shortly after a domestic appeared, who hurried the smiling slumberer to his cot, over which visions of childish gambols hovered.

At this juncture, the hall-door monitor gave vent to a succession of sonorous peals, and Arthur, starting slightly, exclaimed, "I'll venture a wager, father, that our visitor is the subject of your last remark; no other hand could communicate such a peculiar thrill."

Two minutes later the ponderous door creaked back on its iron hinges, and the bowing, facetious Mr. Kensella stood before the family group.

"How now, how now, Colonel Grosvenor,"—Mr. Kensella was noted for bestowing unmerited titles,—"buried in a brown study? To be sure, to be sure! and your ladyship ever the same. There, Arthur, let me squeeze your fingers —but how does my pet get along? Look up, Ellie, and see if you recognize a foe. It is pinchingly cold outside. Jack Frost is mounted and spurred already."

"You are determined, at any rate, to run the length of your string before you give a neighbor an opportunity of greeting you," said Mr. Grosvenor, laughing.

"Undoubtedly," echoed his wife, "I had my lips expressly arranged to deliver a cordial welcome, but the fine-spun sentence disappeared ere an opportune moment arrived to express it with becoming effect."

"Fringed compliments set very becomingly on me to a certainty," returned Mr. Kensella. "But Arthur, my boy, how do you digest the rounded periods of the law? You were always a youth of promise. Mind the musty volumes and master their mystical lore. Tell me, Colonel, where do you intend to send the lamb of your flock?"

By this time he was fairly ensconced between Ella and her father, the former of whom was his especial favorite. The blaze of the gas and fire falling full on his person, revealed a well-built, thick-set man of ordinary stature. His eye was a lively grey, every glance of which was equivalent to a volume of written mirth, and a humorous smile played continually around his Hibernian mouth. A casual observer would barely recognize him as a good-natured, fun-loving disposition; but a more scrutinizing gaze was sufficient to convince him that a deep undercurrent of judgment, reflection and business-tact pervaded his entire character, furnishing him with the general rudiments of success. He was a son of the Emerald Island, but his parents emigrating while he was yet a child, his remembrances of that sea-girt spot were of a very dubious nature. He was a staunch Catholic, as Mr. Grosvenor averred, the latter and his family belonging to the Protestant creed.

"Will Italy," he continued, "of poetical renown, or France, of the fragrant vine, shelter the young American? But no! where was I leaving Prussia?—Prussia! Pshaw, I am taking leave of my senses—I mean the heroic Cantons, Switzerland, as dear to your heart as a hawk to the breast of an eagle. I was always peculiarly unhappy in illustrating, so I leave it to yourselves to soften and apply my comparison. Again I am at fault. What would our languid, shivering Ellie do beneath the shadow of the Alps? Very well to dream of glaciers when snugly seated by a cozy fire; but the reality!—my teeth chatter to think of it."

"You are fairly in your element to-night, Mr. Kensella," remarked Arthur, with an arch and ringing laugh; "I should not be surprised if you had received an official document creating you Earl of Kildare."

"Or, more probably," suggested Ella, "a letter from Namur, bearing the signature of our very philosophical Mary."

This allusion brought a slight blush to the cheek of Arthur Grosvenor, which his mother not perceiving, inquired if her visitor had really heard lately from abroad?

"Well, to be as concise as a Spartan, I will inform the assembled multitude that to-day's mail was freighted with a letter gracefully superscribed to the Hon. Richard Kensella. Now, young man," he added, leaning over towards Arthur, "cast your eye on the post-mark and tell us whence it hails."

Arthur thus selected, made a desperate attempt to force back a burning blush. He took the proffered epistle, eyed it a moment, and handing it to his sister, replied:

"I think it reads Namur. Look you, Ella; your situation with regard to the light is more favorable than mine."

"And as you have it, lassie," said Mr. Kensella, throwing himself back in his chair, "you may read it aloud for the edification of all here present."

Ella smiled fascinatingly as this welcome permission reached her. Mary Kensella and she were reared from their infancy together, and the old adage, that "absence strengthens love," was fully verified in the friends.

The others of the circle, following the example of the Hon. gentleman, also sought an easy position, and listened with the greatest attention, while Ella, in a clear, musical voice, began:

"Dearest Parents:—There is a prolonged shout of exultation ringing through the gardens of Notre-Dame to-day. Two hundred busy feet are rustling through Autumn's falling leaves, and our old convent-halls are re-echoing voices of laughter and mirth. You will ask the reason of the general jubilation, and I will felicitously answer that it is a day of recreation—and where is the girl in Christendom, whose mind and limbs are fettered by school-duties, that does not welcome such a treat? Although not personally given to juvenile gymnastics, I experience the liveliest pleasure in witnessing the feats of my companions. I see one group sitting in the embrasure of a window, surrounding the teacher of its choice. The members are retailing the most mirth-provoking jokes imaginable; that is, if I may be permitted to judge from their laughter-distorted features.

"Yonder, in a moss-covered arbor, is another gathering of exactly contrary appearance—you perceive, by this time, dearest parents, that I am aloof by myself, writing and taking observations. Their distended mouths and pallid faces give me to understand that they are dealing in the line of marvels, and now that I notice Nettie Armand among the number, my opinion is substantiated. But do look at

that band of little desperadoes! As sure as I live they are making preparations for a miniature siege of Palmyra. There is the Roman Infantry, but alas! that they can not even muster a steed. That barren gravel-plot, I suppose, is the weary, sandy desert, and those four perpendicular sticks, defended by as many desperate Palmyrenes, are, no doubt, the formidable walls of the beautiful city of palms!"

"Good from Mary," broke in Mrs. Grosvenor, suppressing an appreciative smile,—while Arthur eagerly drank in every word that dropped from his sister's lips.

"Follow the direction of my finger now," continued Ella, entering warmly into the spirit of the writer, "and behold yon assemblage of Greeks. Contention reigns in the ranks—may be they are preparing for Thermopylæ, and Leonidas is missing; or, more probably still, they are going to beat the retreat of the famous Ten Thousand. But where is the valiant Xenephon? Ah! he is not chosen yet. Now—the mutineers are silenced—and away they run, observing the most enviable disorder in their most pell-mell march."

"The girl would make a model captain if she happened to be of the sterner sex," quietly observed Mr. Grosvenor from the recess of his chair.

"A second Hannibal," was Mr. Kensella's brief reply. Ella resumed:

"But why am I so foolish as to essay a description of the different amusements pursued? There is singing and laughing, and jumping, and fifing and drumming, all joining in a discordant chorus, and leaving me at a decided loss to know whether I shall pronounce it agreeable or otherwise. Oh! how I wish Ella Grosvenor were here to-day! How we would stroll together over the yellow walks and call up sweet remembrances of our distant home. My parents, you know I am happy here, you know that it is an abode of beauty, of learning and of peace. You know that I prefer it to any similar institution on the face of the globe, and yet, think how much would my joy be increased if Ella Grosvenor were among my companions. In a recent letter she informs me that her parents are to give her a few years at an European academy, and since then my busy thoughts have never ceased hoping that this dear, sweet spot may be the chosen site.

"This evening we are to have tableaux, that is, a living pantomimic representation of pictures or descriptions gleaned from books. They are really interesting affairs, some of the views being in the highest degree ludicrous, while others are of the most refined and elevated character. Music and singing from our most charming performers will enliven the entertainment, and cause its memory to be engraven on many hearts.

"Christmas is not far distant, my own dear parents, and then I shall have a good deal of new matter to communicate. The next time you see Ella, remember me affectionately to her, and stroke little Louis' hair and kiss his forehead for me. Adieu my parents, I must not be too much of the hermit, or I would soon have an army of merry youngsters at my elbow, pulling me perforce to take part in their comical plays. I pray for you unceasingly—do likewise for me, and ever think of me as

Your affectionate daughter,
Mary."

When the reader ceased, a cloud was observed to shadow the brow of Mr. Grosvenor. Although a highly intellectual man he was not wholly unprejudiced, and the idea of sending his daughter to a Catholic school jarred against his sectarian feelings. Mrs. Grosvenor, on the contrary, looked exceedingly well pleased. Mary Kensella's mother and she were playmates in their youth, and she always remembered, with vague but sweet emotions, how one afternoon in the leafy time of spring, they sauntered together over hill and vale, and at last arrived at the border of a noble wood. They paused before they entered, for the place was wild and uninviting, but Mrs. Kensella, taking her friend by the arm, courageously led her on, till, by a sudden turning, they stood before an image of the Virgin and the Child. Her companion's first impulse was to prostrate herself in prayer, and she too, instinctively bent the knee, and ejaculated with a fervor that surprised herself: "Mary, shielder of innocence, pray for us." The sequestered situation of the spot was well ejaculated to keep this feeling alive. The statue was placed in a rudely excavated wooden hollow, and some grape-vines threw their straggling tendrils around. It was not a neglected shrine, for a wreath of forest roses was on the Madonna's brow, and the rich, black clusters of the grape twined themselves around her feet. Therefore, it was that Mrs. Grosve-

nor's thoughts dwelt upon that childish adventure, with the emotions of one who recalls an indistinct but beautiful dream.

Ella, still holding the open document in her hand, assumed a thoughtful aspect; but bustling Mr. Kensella, unwilling to let silence claim questionable rights, turned upon the meditating Colonel, and said:

"That she is to go, I take as an indisputed fact,—but tell me, Mr. Grosvenor, where is her future residence to be, and when shall the parting hour arrive?"

"I must admit," returned the addressed, "that my mind was never so completely blindfolded before, nor my will so strangely undetermined."

"Father," hinted Arthur, timidly, "forgive me, but I think Ella could not be sent to a better Institution than the Academy at Namur. Observe what Mary says—she is happy—only one thing is wanting to make her cup overflow, and that is the society of her early friend."

"Arthur's memory grows retentive, and his judgment becomes discriminating," remarked Mr. Grosvenor, looking slyly at the youth, whose face was now hopelessly mantled with a vivid blush.

"Remorseless hurricane," said Mrs. Grosvenor, playfully eying her husband, "do not sweep the poor lad away with your cruel breath. But," addressing Richard Kensella, "tell us a little about the regulations of that Convent. I must confess that my heart warms somewhat towards it, even now."

Never did mortal man more fully understand the mighty importance of a critical situation, than did Mr. Kensella on the present occasion. He drew himself up almost perpendicularly, and resting one hand on his knee, and thrusting the thumb of the other through a convenient button-hole, he delivered himself in the following fashion, as oratorically as a Cicero:

"I do not profess to be posted up in the minor details of the rules, but I acknowledge, that, though the instrumentality of my daughter, I am acquainted more or less with their general spirit. The exclusive object of the Order, is the instruction of the youth of the female sex. Many a young lady of the finest abilities finds there a fountain to moisten the garden of her heart, and zealous teachers who will cull its superfluous weeds. This I learn from Mary, whom you will all admit to be the most unexaggerating character conceivable."

"But tell me, Mr. Kensella," inquired Mr. Grosvenor, somewhat mollified by this lucid description, "are the members of dissenting creeds allowed the liberty to act as they deem proper—for if Ella be restrained in *that* direction, I will never consent to place her there."

"Restraint on her religious freedom!" echoed Mr. Kensella, appearing perfectly horrified, "why man, that is the crowning characteristic of the community—liberty I mean. There are Protestants congregated there from many places, and no more constraint is saddled upon their consciences than, than in fact, inch ropes of penance around my person. True, for the sake of uniformity and order, they are all obliged to attend the Catholic services, but unless the pupil is sincerely and thoroughly convinced that our religion is the only one established by Christ, and moreover, receives the unequivocal consent of her parents, she can never be admitted a member of the ancient Church while under the Convent roof."

"That is an excellent regulation," said Mrs. Grosvenor, delightedly, "and now, Edward, that you have no legal objection, I am persuaded that you will permit Ella to finish at Namur."

"Do father, please do," and the glistening eyes of Ella spoke an almost irresistible appeal.

"Then so be it," ejaculated Mr. Grosvenor, and

"Thank heaven!" fervently escaped from the lips of the excited Arthur.

"Coming back to the old, unanswered question—when is she to depart?" demanded the visitor, casting a benignant glance on the elated Ella.

"Not till the winter is over," her father returned, "and the early spring has set in. Arthur will accompany her across the perilous ocean and consign her to her friend Mary, who will initiate her into the secrets and observances of conventual life."

"You will never regret your decision, I think. But look abroad on the heavens! Come hither, my ripening sentimentalist, and tell me your idea of the scene? To a verity it is glorious! Come, come, Ella, a song before I retire—the most plaintive one in your possession—sad music has always a peculiar charm for me."

"Let it be a duet," interposed Mrs. Grosvenor, "and Arthur will find an opportunity of displaying the power of

his voice." Without further solicitation Ella arose and seated herself at the piano. Arthur assumed a standing position by her side, and taking her portfolio from its marble stand, she selected one of the most thrilling and mournful productions of Concone. A dead hush reigned in the ample drawing-room. The piece was in a minor key—Ella's fingers ran over the instrument, and a prelude, soft, wailing and witching, stole softly on the captivated ear,—first like the warble of a bird away in the shadowy distance, whose notes are broken by the intervening leaves, then, rising gradually, with a melancholy pomp, and finally filling the room with a triumphant but momentary swell that bore the soul aloft and left it in the company of angels. As that melodious burst, like the murmur of a receding billow, died faintly and languidly away, two voices catching, as it were, at its expiring whisper, revived it with a gentle swell. For some time Arthur's rich tenor and Ella's quivering soprano blended beautifully together—then they sang separately, but towards the conclusion they united again, and the music becoming loud and forcible, and the voices firm and high, a sensation of almost delirious pleasure was communicated to the minds of the bystanders. Suddenly silence pervaded the apartment, echo only giving back a shadowy idea of the wild and touching song.

"Beyond commendation!" said Mr. Kensella, recovering himself from a revery,—"How vividly it brings to my memory a legend that haunted my infant life. They told me, and I still remember the voice of mystery and the eye of wonder, of a lonely and desolated spot that was washed by the waves of the sea. They said that the ravens frequented it, and that the cliffs above were inhabited only by the disembodied; that to an immense stone on the coast was chained a human being, and that when evening came down on the earth, a voice of wailing sadness was mingled with the breeze. It was, I was informed, the prisoner's lay, in which he bemoaned his isolation, and so unearthly, so plaintive were his incoherent apostrophes, that the birds looked down on him from over the rocks and lent their tiny voices to prolong his mournful tale."

"Strange how the associations of infancy will cling to us through existence," remarked Mrs. Grosvenor, shuddering, for that undefinable memory of Mary in the woods, rose like a half-finished dream before her vision.

Mr. Grosvenor smiled—Ella's thoughts were in a world of poetical beauty, and Arthur was a living monument of reflection. "I am for the road," said Mr. Kensella, gathering himself from his seat—"that bewitching song has thrown a spell around us all. I am off. Good night, my minstrels. I almost doubt if that was not improvisitory. General, to-morrow will be a busy mercantile day. Mrs. Grosvenor, adieu."

Shortly after the wheels of a carriage were heard rattling over the graveled avenue; the doors and gates of the demesne were barred and bolted, and soon the absence of light in the mansion proclaimed that all had retired to rest.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOYAGE.

Cold night was fast falling,
And phantoms appalling
The crew were recalling
From sad thoughts and lone:
Thick dews were descending,
Black shadows contending
With Luna for sending
Her silent beams down.

Months rolled away since the events narrated in our last chapter occurred. It was spring, and a gallant vessel rigged and ready for her voyage, stood bravely out before the city of Brotherly Love. The anchor was yet buried in the water, but active preparations were making to heave it to. A mournful assemblage was standing on the cabin deck, and the loud and frequent sob, and the moistened eye, and the downcast face bespoke a parting scene at hand. A nearer view of the group and we recognize its every member. Ella Grosvenor is about leaving the happy home of her childhood—her parents and friends are around her—they are breathing their sad farewells.

"Visitors ashore!" cried the captain, in his stentorian accents. "Let the moorings be loosened," he added, addressing the sailors, and advancing to our party, he continued,

"Mr Grosvenor and Lady will not deem me unfeeling, but the embarkation time has arrived. Your daughter shall have every attainable comfort, and we will do all in our power to render the voyage as agreeable to her as we can."

"Thank you, Captain," returned Mr. Grosvenor, his deep voice trembling with emotion. "Farewell, my beloved Ella," straining her to his bosom,—"remember my last advices—write often and soon."

She could not articulate a sentence. It was the first time she left her home for any considerable period, and now the loneliness and desolation and gaylessness of her situation were revoltingly vivid to her mind. Her mother was overwhelmed with a mother's grief. She pressed her daughter to her bosom and let the scalding tears of maternal anguish fall on her pallid face. But they must burst the tender spell that bound them to the spot—the ship was moving from the shore and they were the only visitors aboard. Mr. Kensella earnestly recommended Arthur to keep Ella merry during the watery trip. The large, round tears were in Louis's innocent eye, and he clung to his sister's dress with the vague determination to delay her as long as possible. Arthur was the only one capable of affording consolation, and he chiefly employed himself in whispering words of comfort in his mother's ear, and addressing cheering sentences to his father.

The nautical song of the sons of Neptune again reminded the Grosvenors that they were trespassing on time. With one fond embrace they tore themselves from their weeping children, and Ella was hurried by her brother to her stateroom, in order to prevent her from seeing the beloved forms on shore. Vain, however, were his fraternal endeavors to console her, for no sooner had she recovered her composure than she returned to her former station, and continued to gaze on the dear clustered group waiving its last adieus, till the receding vessel and increasing distance obscured it from her grief-dimmed sight. Then she retired to the cabin, and bitter, melancholy tears gave ease to her breaking heart.

After breakfast next morning, Arthur again essayed to soothe his sister's anguish, although, himself, poor lad, had any thing but a joyful soul. He escorted her on deck to catch a last glimpse of the fast-fading land which rose with misty indistinctness before them. But the appearance only renewed her recent emotions. She thought she discovered far amid the shadow of the stately trees the site of her ancestral

residence. There was her father looking vacantly out on the quiet, winding river—her mother in tearful loneliness—Louis gazing anxiously around with strange and wondering looks. Then, there was the deserted air of the mansion—the silent harp and piano—the pensive countenances and measured step of the domestics—the empty places at table—Mr. Kensella's fruitless but friendly efforts to restore the reign of mirth. As the vision thickened her limbs began to fail and she found herself compelled to seek the shelter of her room, where Arthur shortly rejoined her.

"Ella," he said, seating himself by her side and trying an excusable method to draw her away from her reveries, "have you bestowed a glance on your fellow travelers yet?"

Ella shook her head and smiled.

"I observe," he continued, "that some of them pay particular attention to yourself. A certain young lady for instance, who at present is enjoying the scenery without, never takes her eye from you when you chance to be thrown in her path."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ella, not a little surprised. "Ah! now that I recall the circumstance, I have a faint idea of the person to whom you allude. She is accompanied, I believe, by a silver-haired veteran of seventy—you know that my chronology sometimes runs ahead of my convictions, for I love to imagine people standing on the brink of the grave."

"There however, you are not *exceedingly* far wrong," returned Arthur, delighted to perceive that he had helped to assuage her sorrow, "he is really a venerable-looking gentleman, and I have had the honor of spending a few delicious hours yesternight in his society."

"Behold, Arthur, they are coming in: I like the girl's appearance. There is congeniality in her eyes. O! we must be friends—but who will introduce us?"

"Pooh!" retorted Arthur, "ceremonial introduction on ship-board! These drawing-room formulas are easily dispensed with here. One of you will simply salute the other, conversation will of course ensue, and the friendship thus commenced will ripen more rapidly than if you had been formally presented."

"I feel extremely awkward, Arthur," remarked Ella, casting down her eyes and pretending to be wholly absorbed in the perusal of a book that lay conveniently near. "They are making directly towards us." "Mr. Grosvenor," said

the old gentleman, approaching Arthur, "we are clearing the harbor fast. The faintest outline of the coast is now barely distinguishable; in less than an hour we will be out, as the poet once averred, 'far on the waters of the dark, blue sea.'"

"It is a lovely morning outside," observed the strange young lady, advancing to where Ella reclined; "a splendid panoramic view is visible from the stern of the vessel—such a view, indeed, as rarely the eye beholds."

"I am delighted to find that you appreciate its peculiar beauty," answered Ella, her dark eye kindling with animation; "it is my native place, and therefore I can not summon sufficient calmness to look upon it without betraying my thoughts."

"It is, in truth, a romantic spot to claim as the scene of one's nativity," returned her companion; "I must point to the sylvan woods of the West, and say in the simplicity of my heart—it was here that the light of heaven first dawned upon Charlotte Mariette Austin," and a merry, musical laugh rang joyously through the room.

Prior to this, the two gentlemen, like friends of many years standing, left the cabin arm-in-arm, discoursing on topics evidently interesting to both. The elder had not, as Ella surmised, weathered the storms of seventy winters, but he had surely seen the autumn of his sixtieth year. He was hale, healthy, and remarkably straight for a man of his advanced age; possessed a very intelligent but self-satisfied countenance, with a step as agile and firm as it possibly could have been at forty. His hair was snowy white, his eye of a dazzling grey, and his nose rather inclined to the aquiline. On the whole, his demeanor impressed you with the involuntary conviction that he had seen service, either military or naval.

The new-made acquaintances were thus left to themselves to mature an intimacy so auspiciously begun. Mariette Austin was about the same age as Ella, but cast by nature in an entirely different mould. She was of ordinary size, had a splendid form, and a sweeping, graceful carriage. Her hair, brown and abundant, was done up in an unpretending knot; her face was oval, her features regular, and her lips of that sufficient, pouting nature that sometimes characterize indulged and wayward children. Judges would declare that she had a beautiful eye, for the reason that it was so

expressive. Her manner was usually demonstrative, and you could not help thinking, at first sight, that she was a most impulsive and affectionate girl. In this she differed vastly from Ella, who was of a retiring, unobtrusive disposition, but, as we remarked before, extremely sensitive and loving.

They were seated together on the sofa, and Ella thus continued the conversation we dropped off:

"The West! Why, it has always had a kind of polar attraction for my thoughts. I imagine it a place so wild, so green, so secluded; watered by meandering rills and covered with a carpet of velvety, emerald down."

"And of course, Marshal-General Winter, in his snowy uniform and on his icy steed, never galloped through the verdant country of your conception," laughed Mariette, throwing a mischevious glance at Ella; "but never mind, we will soon be in a land of beauty, where bowers of roses, similar to those described by Moore, abound in the richest profusion."

"If the question be not impertinent," remarked Ella, "I would ask where your journey ends?"

"And were it propounded," returned her companion, "I, with the greatest pleasure in the world, would answer that my destination is not fixed. I merely intend to pay a flying visit to some of the most renowned crevices of Belgium, France, and Italy. My grandfather, who is a naval ex-officer, so far gratifies my girlish propensity for traveling."

"Do you intend to direct your steps to or near Namur?" inquired Ella, anxiously, for already her heart began to attach itself to her amiable friend.

"We will go to Antwerp," Mariette replied, "for the sake of its Gothic Cathedral—but there is nothing of special interest in Namur to attract us there."

"But will you repair to Antwerp first?"

"That is altogether a matter of inclination."

"I am destined for Namur, where it is intended I shall finish my education."

"Indeed!" cried Mariette, delightedly, "then we shall not part company so soon. Come along, come along with me," she continued, seizing Ella by the hand, "my grandfather must be informed of this most delectable intelligence. But," she suddenly added, "I forgot to ask your name."

"Ella Grosvenor," was the sententious reply, and before she had time to utter another syllable, she was hurried on

deck by the impetuous Mariette Austin. In an instant the quick eye of the latter ran from the stem to the stern of the vessel; at length it alighted on her grandparent, who was sitting in the forecastle in earnest conversation with Arthur.

"Grandpapa, grandpapa," she exclaimed, I have found a companion for my travels. Miss Grosvenor is going to Belgium, and therefore we will direct our steps first to the Belgic shore."

"I am right glad to hear the intelligence," said Mr. Warren Clarendon, who was related to Mariette on the mother's side; "I am very well pleased indeed. I trust you will become friends, sincere and intimate."

"Your hope is already realized," replied his volatile granddaughter, and her peculiarly musical laugh floated away on the breeze. "See, dearest Ella, what a magnificent prospect is afforded from the larboard side. Let us mount and look out upon the sea."

Ella did as she was desired. Her eye turned instinctively landward, and as she descried the indefinite and now shapeless Pennsylvanian coast, her emotions were about gaining the mastery, when a sunny little child came laughingly along and hid his curly head in the ample folds of her dress.

"The angels know one another," whispered an almost inaudible voice, and turning, Ella beheld an aged steerage passenger, to whom, on the previous evening, she had generously given alms. Deeply she blushed, as the meaning of the delicate compliment forced itself upon her mind, while, with a trembling "God bless you, Miss," the grateful Irishwoman disappeared among the crowd.

"What a vision of loveliness," murmured Mariette, as the boy archly peeped at her from under Ella's dress; and it was no inappropriate comment, for a more perfectly beautiful child could hardly be imagined. His eyes were of the blue of an unclouded summer's day, his hair was golden and curly, and his countenance dazzlingly fair, of angelic expression. Three springs might have smiled upon the radiant boy.

"What is your name, my darling," interrogated Ella, as she gently raised him and seated him between Mariette and herself.

"Alphonsus," lisped the child; and pleased with the novelty of his situation, he looked from one to another, then at the curling waves, at the girls once more, and, finally, satisfied with his observations, he demanded to be let down.

"Will you not stay with us awhile," inquired Mariette, in a soft and winsome tone.

"No—Mamma will want Alphonsus," and the little fellow was no sooner on his feet than he darted to the opposite side of the vessel, and was screened from their view by the cabin.

"How strangely beautiful the child," remarked Ella to her companion, when he was no longer to be seen; "I experienced unwonted feeings while he was in the vicinity."

"On my part, I must acknowledge to similar unaccountable emotions," Mariette rejoined; "It was not his appearance altogether that captivated me, but a something unearthly and mysterious in his little looks."

"It is the first time I noticed him," said Ella, with a heavy sigh.

"And that is because you were so totally absorbed in your sorrow. He is with his parents, who are the most unpleasant and melancholy people you could desire to behold. See; they are walking to the leeward, with little Alphonsus between them."

Ella followed with her eyes the direction of Mariette's voice, and beheld the individuals in question. They were as her friend had described them, only that the father wore a proud, distrustful look, which unequivocally bespoke him the possessor of some secret grief. Slowly they paraded the deck, each holding a hand of the prattler, and never, save while listening to his sweet and innocent chatter, did any thing like a smile dispel the sadness from their brows.

"They must idolize that earthly angel, as evidently they do," said Ella, after a considerable pause, during which she had minutely scrutinized the movements of the strangers. "There is so much of a settled melancholy, not a peaceful melancholy either, in their appearance, that I almost covet their confidence."

"Which," Mariette returned, "I am inclined to believe you will never obtain, if I be permitted to draw inferences from antecedents."

Mr. Clarendon and Arthur advanced towards them now, bade them descend from the pedestals, as they chose to term the benches, and prepare for the noontide meal. Soon after not a soul was to be seen on deck, all having retired to their respective divisions to partake of a dinner at sea.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURIAL AT SEA.

The sullen day is dying out,
The heavy clouds are drifting past,
The wind is howling round about
The earth and sea with fitful blast.

Thus two weeks elapsed. A sickness consequent upon change of air, prostrated the youthful friends for the space of a day or so, but having naturally good constitutions they victoriously buffeted the storm. As their knowledge of each other increased, their mutual esteem grew with it. They read together from their favorite authors; in company they looked out upon the limitless ocean; they gazed in unison upon the stars; in short, in sentiment and action, they were like sister-twins. Arthur and the old gentleman also became inseparable. In their strolls they were frequently joined by the captain, a shrewd, observant man, determined, it would appear, to secure himself a host of friends. The parents of Alphonsus carefully kept themselves aloof from all acquaintances. If addressed, they answered briefly; but not a person on board would think of holding a lengthy conversation with them. The weather was exceedingly calm, so they made any thing but rapid headway; and this, their second week on sea, was unmarked by a single incident of importance.

Affairs, however, could not remain long in this tranquil condition. An event occurred on the fifteenth day of the voyage that cast a gloom over every member aboard. Little Alphonsus, the universal favorite, was seized by a malignant fever. The patter of his tiny feet was no longer heard upon the deck—his sweet and lisping voice was hushed, or it only reached the ear when, in childish delirium, it called upon his father, or besought his mother to come and ease him of his pain. Mariette and Ella scarcely left his couch for a moment. They watched the parched lips of the sufferer open to converse with invisible beings, and sometimes they saw a bright smile breaking through the shadows on his face. They beheld the mother, in an agony of grief, bend over her angel child, and whisper rapid, incoherent prayers to God for his restoration. They saw the father, in speechless anguish,

kneel by his little cot; saw him peer, with strange inquisitiveness, into the unconscious eyes of the babe, and then hide his stern features in the coverlets of the bed in the tearless agony of a broken heart.

The voice of revelry was silenced in the ship during the period of Alphonsus' illness. Even the reckless were partially softened; conversations in the vicinity of the cabin were carried on in an under tone, as if fearful of disturbing the slumberer, and the mariners were sometimes noticed to look around as if expecting his approach. A general gloom was prevalent—it was as if a spirit was taking its heavenward flight.

Six days and nights did the mother watch over the pillow of her darling, and hardly once in that time were her eyelids closed in sleep. She implored the Omnipotent, with almost appalling earnestness, to spare the life of her only child—to spare it, at least, till they would reach the shore, that he might have a Christian's burial, and that a simple cross might shadow his early grave. Then she offered herself as a victim to appease the wrath of heaven, as food for its retributive vengeance; but invariably her wild apostrophe ended with an appeal in behalf of her dying son.

Vain were her heart-wrung entreaties. The Almighty gazed on the boy in his innocent beauty and called him home to himself, ere sin or misery darkened his infantine path. He was arrayed in his winding-sheet by Ella and her friend; the golden ringlets were adjusted over the lovely face and forehead, the lids were closed upon the pure and glistening eyes, and the sweet lips, even in the rigidity of death, were parted by an angelic smile. Mariette Austin severed two shining tresses, to give them afterwards to his parents; for now, with a strange indifference, they looked upon all that passed.

On the morning of the second day after his demise, preparations were making to consign Alphonsus to a watery grave. A box-like coffin was ready to receive its beautiful tenant, and upon its cover, according to the express commands of the father, a crucifix was rudely carved. The passengers formed themselves into a procession to attend the burial at sea. It was a sad and rending spectacle, and while the babe descended into the waters, all save the father, wept. His unnoticing stare was either the meaningless look of the maniac, or the unmistakable evidence of a broken heart.

The mother made one desperate grasp at the coffin when they attempted to raise it from the deck, strained it with vehement convulsiveness to her bosom, and the next instant sank into the happy unconsciousness of a swoon, holding still that precious treasure, with iron strength, to her breast. Gently they disengaged her clasp, and when the burden touched the water, a subdued but mournful wail rose simultaneously from the bystanders. With one impulse, the assembled mourners fell on their knees, and many an eye that had not been moistened for years, shed abundant tears over the grave of Alphonsus. The father alone maintained a standing position. Curiously he gazed upon the ruffled ocean, and when the troubled waves closed over the little coffin, an inexplicable smile stole across his ghastly features, which betrayed, alas! a more fearful condition of mind than the mother's stormy grief.

That evening he was struggling with a raging fever. The childless mother awoke from her death-like trance to find that her troubles had only begun. Her husband was stretched on the couch of suffering, and he recognized not even herself. Every one was anxious to offer consolation, but, with cold disdain, she rejected human relief. The doctor of the vessel exerted his utmost skill to stay the fearful ravages of the malady, for the symptoms were indeed alarming; and the wife sometimes hid her burning cheeks when the ravings of the unconscious patient were heard by the people of the ship.

"Captain," he would whisper, in hoarse and guttural accents, "when I am dead, you must bury me deep in the bosom of the sea; nail the coffin closely, that they may not see my face, and then put me down, far down into the waves —lay me next to the grave of Alphonsus. Say," he continued, as if beckoning some thing invisible forward, "did he die? Did they bury him in the angry sea? Did the mother's heart break? Answer?" and his coal-black eyes blazed up as if they were suddenly ignited. "Then they didn't lay him in a Christian grave—they didn't rear the cross above his resting-place. And why? Was it because of his father's sin—was it a retribution?" Then he would sit up in the bed, lean forward in a listening attitude and imploringly resume: —"Captain, let the waves meet over my coffin—sink me *deep, deep* into the ocean, where the eye of man can not penetrate, and then, when I am gone, gone far down into the

waters, nobody shall know my name, nobody shall know my history, nobody shall know my fate, and," he added, with fearful emphasis, his voice becoming hollow and sepulchral, "*nobody shall know my sin!*"

The impressions created on the minds of the passengers by the mysterious sayings of that strange, unsociable man, were unsatisfactory and confused. Some inclined to the belief that a crime of magnitude burdened his conscience, while others, more lenient, attributed his aberrations to sorrow for the loss of his child. Still, the latter, with all their good-will and philanthropy, could not account for his isolation previous to the decease of Alphonsus; so, with a knowing shake of the head, as much as to say, that time would reveal the secret, their cautious opponents let the subject quietly drop.

A very picture of resignation, the wife hovered nigh the couch of the remorse-stricken sufferer. After a week and a half of sleepless watchfulness, she perceived with pleasure a change for the better in her husband, and when the physician substantiated the opinion, the hot tears of gratitude came gushing to her eyes. Then, for the first time, she was noticed to fall upon her knees in thanksgiving, but a sudden sense of her unworthiness rushing upon her like a blight, she hastily arose, with an expression on her features like the sternness of despair.

Slowly the invalid recovered. When reason had regained its empire it was pitiful to see the look of troubled inquietude that dwelt in his every lineament. During his convalescence he became sombre and extremely irritable. Fits of despondency were frequent, and to the voyagers the melancholy man grew daily more of an enigma.

The fifth week of their journey had arrived; a rumor was spread through the vessel that land was discernible in the distance, and eager hearts were swelling with exultation, when their fond hopes were mercilessly dashed to the ground. Consternation was general when the information became public that the shadowy thing mistaken for the outline of the shore was in reality the harbinger of an impending storm. It was in the evening that the phantom-like spectre arose. Huge clouds blackened the western horizon, while the space above their heads was beautiful and serene. Gradually these thick and massive islands rolled themselves towards the zenith, till finally, hardly a streak of light was visible in the misty

upper fields. Then the spirit of wild commotion agitated the swelling billows; strong and boisterous winds blew fiercely from the north-east, frequent flashes of lightning threw a lurid glare upon the sea, and the hoarse rumbling of the distant thunder sent thrills of painful anxiety through the breasts of all on board. Night descended rapidly, and with it the horror of the vessel's situation increased. An inundating shower of rain burst from the flood-gates of heaven; stronger than the breath of a giant the winds lashed the waves, and an almost palpable darkness flung itself over the angry deep. Peal after peal of live thunder reverberated through the arches of the sky. Wrathfully high arose the indignant billows, then they dived into yawning chasms, opening terrific ravines, where, in there potent might, they momently threatened to engulph the fragile ship.

On board the helpless vessel what a varied picture was presented! The steerage passengers, principally Irish Catholics, tearfully besought the protection of heaven, begging Mary to implore her Son to cast a look upon the elements and bid their uproar cease. In the cabin all was prayerless consternation. Ella and Mariette, with countenances pale as marble, and hands clapsed above their bosoms, gazed in speechless agony upon the appalling scene. Mr. Clarendon and Arthur, although betraying less, were just as deeply affected—our convalescent, yet a prisoner to his bed, exhibited signs of enraptured delight, followed by moments of excruciating mental agony. His wife was unspeakably miserable. "O, God," she exclaimed, in tones of anguish, "do not call us yet to Thyself—delay thy justice a little longer. Thou hast taken thy victim, our last and only one—give us time for repentance—time to make reparation to thine injured honor."

Towards midnight the storm abated. The winds died feebly away—dense clouds glided from the repentant firmament, and the lonely watchers who still kept their vigils, beheld the sorrowing moon whiten with her beams of silent hope, the dark, subsiding waves. Peace with those pure soft rays descended; and reassured of protection, the occupants of the ship sank into a refreshing slumber. Not all, however, for one was upon the deck, kneèling on the damp and chilly boards, with hands and eyes elevated in thanksgiving. It was the mother of Alphonsus, offering her prayers to the Most High.

Young morning came radiantly from the east, smiling as joyously on the sea as if his grim predecessor had not ruffled a wave. Mariette and Ella were on deck, and their blanched cheeks and eager eyes proclaimed that the subject of conversation was the storm of the foregoing night. So absorbed were they, that Arthur, unperceived, approached to congratulate them on the calm self-possession they had exhibited during the recent elemental war. "However," he cheerfully concluded, "I do not think your presence of mind will be called into further action. A few days more will bring us within sight of the land of the 'Lion-hearted King.'"

"Out upon that wild Crusader," said Mariette, scornfully, "and the Edwards and the Henrys too. I take more complacency in styling it the country of the glorious Elizabeth, the Georges and the Peers."

"I must confess," broke in Ella, with a satisfied smile, "that my sympathies are enlisted in favor of England's early monarchs. True, they were not always models of impeccability, but if they were not superior to their successors in that respect, I studied my history very superficially indeed."

Arthur here launched off into a lucid explanation, and reconciled the antagonistic opinions of the young ladies by proving that different authors viewed the actions of the buried kings in different lights, and painted their characters according to their prejudices or convictions. The conversation then turned into another channel, and the trio only left their seats when the noon-tide meal was announced.

Five days after these occurrences, the goodly ship "Sea Eagle" was safely harbored in the Liverpool Docks. The Grosvenor's took this route in preference to a direct line, in order that they might catch a railway view of England as they rattled through its cities and towns. We will not follow them, however, in their peregrinations, but let them find their way unchronicled to Namur. Mr. Clarendon and Mariette were their companions till they entered the heart of Antwerp. They parted in that ancient city—the girls wept at the separation, but when Mariette promised to write, and let Ella know of her travels, mishaps and acquaintances, and Ella bound herself to answer page for page—a partial sunshine was restored to their mournful hearts, and each took her way as cheerfully as might be under the existing circumstances.

CHAPTER IV.

SCHOOL-DAYS.

How sweet to think of vanished days
That live in memory only,
When golden dreams and happy lays
Chased thoughts and musings lonely!

It was towards the close of the "leafy month," as poets and painters love to designate June, the blooming and blushing, that a vehicle of pretentious appearance rolled pompously through the narrow Rue des Fossés of Namur. It halted before an irregular chain of grand but gloomy-looking buildings, inclosed on every side by walls, over which the tops of the structures were barely visible. Aided by the indispensable footman, two individuals alighted from the barouche—a minute or more and Arthur and Ella Grosvenor stood on the step of the main entrance to the Convent de Notre Dame. A tremulous ring brought to the door a modest and obliging Sister, to whom our travelers intimated their desire of an interview with the Superioress. They were accordingly ushered into a spacious reception-room, there to await the appearance of the truly venerable Nun.

Having introduced themselves, been kindly welcomed, and entertained for some time by a lively account of the manners and customs of the people among whom they now sojourned, in contra-distinction to those of the adventuresome and speculative American, Ella inquired for Mary Kensella, and the Superioress promptly arose to summon her thither from her books.

A few minutes later a light and rapid step echoed through the lofty hall—the heavy door flew open, and the long separated friends were clapsed in each others embrace.

"Ellie, Ellie!" exclaimed Mary, almost spheechless with delight, "a million times welcome! O, I am nearly beside myself with joy. And Arthur," she went on, extending her hand, with undisguised pleasure, "It is like a resurrection to see the loved ones of our childhood after such a length of time. But how is all at home? My father—my mother—all?"

"Well, dearest Mary, all well. O, how the recollections of by-gone days revive as I gaze on you once more."

"Your mother, charged me, Mary, to be the bearer of this communication to you," said Arthur, his eyes sparkling with emotion, as he handed her a neatly enveloped note. She took it eagerly, hastily devoured its contents, and pressing it to her bosom, exclaimed:

"Dearest, sweetest mother: always solicitous! always watchful!"

A slight knock at the door interrupted further comment; Mary responded to the summons, and admitted Sister Angelique, a stately and benevolent Nun.

"Our First Teacher, Ella," said Mary, by way of introduction, and Sister Angelique, advancing with endearing simplicity, kissed Ella on both cheeks, remarking that she was intimately acquainted with her through the vivid descriptions of her friend. "What affectionate creatures these Sisters are," whispered Arthur, to Mary, "I am under the impression that they couldn't do better than give *you* a lesson or two."

"Incorrigible boy," she laughingly returned, "I perceive you are as much alive to a joke as you were many, many years ago."

Mary Kensella was exactly the reverse of her father, both in disposition and contour. Her face was habitually thoughtful; sudden or violent passion was seldom depicted thereon, and seldom indeed, were her emotions permitted to be legibly portrayed. She was known among her school-mates as the philosopher, a title most deservedly conferred. Her figure was slight, of medium altitude, and she might have just passed the threshold of her eigtheenth year. Into the amusements of her companions she rarely entered, but their frolicsome, sportive gampols infallibly called forth the smile, and occasionally the ready repartee.

The four conversed as gaily as if they had been acquainted for ages. Ella related to her sympathetic listeners the sad story of the infant's burial at sea, and Arthur described the storm, which lost nothing of its grandeur and terrific wildness by his bold and masculine recital. An hour rolled away unheeded; Sister Angelique began to grow uneasy, and Arthur saw it was time for him to depart. The Nun retired while they were making their adieus.

It was only when her brother's form was closed for a day

from her sight, that the spirit of loneliness weighed upon Ella Grosvenor's sensitive soul. Resting her head on Mary Kensella's bosom, she wept bitter, scalding tears :—her home rose before her—her brother more desolate than herself. Every sob found an echo in the breast of her companion, who did all in her power to soothe her convulsive grief.

"Come," she proposed as a last resource, "come with me to the chapel. Tell your sorrow, Ella, to our dear, compassionate Lord, and at his feet you will find what human consolation can not give."

Ella passively presented her hand :

"Conduct me where you will," she said, "but do not introduce me among these light-hearted girls yet."

"Sister, Sister," cried one of a merry group collected around a Teacher, "behold our new companion! I am sure," she continued, as Ella, escorted by Mary, found her way into the beautiful play-grounds, "I am sure that if my heart were not already engaged, I would fall in love with her at first sight."

"How sad and spirit-like she looks!" exclaimed Nettie Armand, the marvelous individual made mention of in Mary Kensella's letter, "I am confident she has many wild tales to tell us of the West."

"O I am *so* much rejoiced that she has arrived," put in another of the assembly, "for she can undoubtedly regale us with many stories of that strangely interesting people, the Indians of North America."

"Perhaps she has had personal encounters with some of them in the forests," hinted the girl at the last speaker's elbow.

"Do you think so, Minnie?" asked one on the opposite side, "I am sadly afraid she would make poor headway in the line of self-defense, against an uncivilized barbarian."

"I will venture a sou she can sing," spoke a petulant little Miss in the center, "that very classical mouth of her's declares much in her favor."

"Her demeanor is very attractive and very unassuming indeed," said a young lady, hitherto silent, who had been attentively watching Ella, "I think she can not fail to become an universal favorite."

The Sister paid rather dubious attention to these freely proffered observations. She was engaged in marking the direction taken by Mary and her friend, as they entered the path to the chapel.

"Ha!" exclaimed she, clasping her hands delightedly, "I surmised it was there ma chère infante would her steps guide."

When they reached that beautiful retreat of devotion, Mary silently conducted Ella into the interior, leaving her before the principal altar, while herself sought the feet of the Dolorous Virgin, situated in a niche to the left. Long and fervently did she pray before the simple, flower-decorated shrine, but neither longer nor with more devotion than Ella, who felt in that strange place of worship, something like a golden shower of peace descend and shed a misty consolation over her agitated soul.

"Mary," said Ella, as they left the chapel together and followed the direction of a graveled, winding path, "why is it that you bent your knee before the statue of the Madonna? I know that I reverence her, I know that I love her, but, making every allowance for affection and respect, I can not but condemn your Catholic custom of worshiping a creature, be she ever so good and so holy."

"Do not say *worship*, dearest Ella," returned Mary, mildly, "we worship only God."

"Why I saw you bent in adoration myself," exclaimed Ella, in amazement, "and so wrapt were you in your prayer that the tears came unheeded down your cheeks."

"I only experienced the emotions that a dutiful daughter would feel towards a mother who loved her unto death—who gave up the dearest, best treasures of her heart to secure the happiness of her child—who suffered—who spent nights of sleepless agony and days of restless toil—who died—but why do I speak? Where is the mother that would do it? Where is the mother that would take the son of her bosom and deliver him over to death, to crucifixion, to atone for the crimes of mankind? Where is the mother who would take her child, and that child a sinless child, and that child a *God*, and lay him upon the altar of circumcision to have his tender flesh lacerated by a stony knife—to have his young blood flow forth in crimson streams to satisfy the justice of an offended Deity, to intercede for ungrateful, perfidious man? Where is the mother, O, Ella, where is the mother but Mary, that would ascend the heights of Calvary in the gory tracks of her Son—that would [redacted] the fruit of her immaculate womb exposed to the jeers of the millions—that would see him elevated on the cross, Ella—that would see

him in agony expire? And O, *her* heart was broken, but she survived for me, for me alone—and she offered Jesus freely, her only, her God-like Son, to satisfy for *my* sins, to atone for my misdeeds."

Ella smiled at the warmth exhibited by her friend, but said she was not satisfied on the subject of adoration yet.

"Ella," answered Mary, solemnly, "when Jesus let his head drop in anguish on his bosom, after his last loving prayer had been uttered, his mother remained a lonely and neglected pilgrim, in order to become a mother to me, to all, collectively and individually, and think you then it is wrong to pay her the reverence that any child would to an extraordinarily devoted mother?"

"Yes, but you worship her even as you do your God," again reiterated Ella.

"Far from it my friend, far from it indeed," replied Mary, endeavoring to keep her rising temper cool. "Read any Catholic prayer, from the simplest to the most sublime, and you will be convinced that we infallibly ask Mary and the Saints to *pray* for us, but beg mercy and pardon from God. The former are mediators and intercessors, whom we employ to plead our case, as, to use a very evident comparison, a prisoner would engage a lawyer to represent him favorably to the court."

"Ah," said Ella, smiling, "I perceive the difference now; and, to continue your analogy, as a captive has to buy the services of his counsel, so you interest the heavenly pleaders in your behalf by earnest petition and prayer."

"You have the right end of the thread at length, Ellie dear," laughed Mary, merrily, for she was evidently pleased with her successful logic, "but now that you are in a calmer frame of mind, let us mix a little with the scholars."

Accordingly they retraced their steps, Ella with child-like wonder expressing her admiration at every thing around.

The young ladies smilingly fell back to permit the new comers to select their choice places. Sister Angelique spoke kindly to Ella, and in a short period the conversation became general and brisk. When the ordinary topics were exhausted, Sister proposed to lead Ella through the principal apartments, and upon Mary's volunteering to be the trumpeter of the Convent's fame and the expounder of its doctrines, they cheerfully betook themselves on their tour of exploration.

Ella was delighted with the ramble—the place was almost a city in itself. There was the old baronial residence, with its stuccoed ceilings and imposing front, on which was emblazoned the arms of the ancient proprietor—the house of the novices, the building assigned to the professed nuns, and the splendid chapel. But what most attracted her attention was the extreme cleanliness of all; not the vestige of a soil was to be found on the nicely sanded floors. As a unity, that Convent City was magnificent, and wonderful in its distinctive parts. So at least thought Ella Grosvenor, and so she told her friends.

When night, in its star-lit but dusky beauty descended, and the young American stranger was left alone with her thoughts, sadness spread his jetty pinions and darkly overshadowed her couch. Ah! then came back the momory of her distant home, her parents, her brothers, and she tried to pray, but the words of impetration died inaudibly on her lips. She essayed to commune with the Mighty One that created her, but it was as if her power of utterance was fettered. In her agony, she remembered the saying of Mary Kensella, that the Mother of Jesus was more than a mother to man, so summoning the remnants of her declining courage, she timidly besought the Virgin to implore her Son to give contentment to her soul. Then it seemed to her that a weight was removed from her interior, that a radiance shone around her bed, and murmuring to herself "how sweet is this Catholic devotion," she sank into a calm and peaceful sleep.

Refreshed and exhilarated, she arose next morning with the memory of a mysterious vision vaguely present to her mind. She thought she was wandering on the banks of a mighty river; that tall trees bent over it and their branches met, making a beautiful arcade, through which the rays of the sun partially penetrated; that the waters were stilly and rippleless; that breezes were hushed into repose; that an awful silence, appalling as the silence of the grave, reigned unquestioned; that suddenly, far up the stream, was heard the sound of music; that it was of unearthly softness, becoming momently more distinct, and then, that down upon the breast of the wavelets, was borne a fairy-like, magnificent barge; that a luminous cross, flinging diamond radiance around, was at its bowsprit; that a lady of surpassing loveliness reclined against the base of this mystical sign; that

her eyes were sad and downcast, her hands united in prayer; that little winged musicians touched harps whose strings were of gold, and lyres whose tones were of silver sweetness; that still the lady was not gladdened; that her own heart fluttered wildly to afford her some relief; and then that the voice of an angel whispered in her ear "It is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She sorrows for the sins of the world."

She assisted at Mass on the following morning, and after going through some minor duties, visited the principal rooms under the escort of Mary Kensella. The cabinet especially elicited her admiration. It was a very reservoir of curiosities, collected from different quarters—a literal emporium of science. Just as she completed the review, it was announced that her brother awaited her, and flying to the parlor rather than walking thither, she was soon in his embrace. She told him how desolate and sad she felt after his departure yesterday—how Mary, with sisterly affection, endeavored to give consolation, and once she thought of revealing her phantom-dream, but considering it childish and unmeaning, she kept it to herself.

When dinner was concluded, Ella found herself surrounded by a dozen friendly school-mates.

"Let us hie," exclaimed one, joyously, "to the vicinity of the Gothic Chapel. There we will introduce you to a specimen of the 'genus homo,' with whom you should already have been acquainted."

"It is Theresa's favorite resort," cried another, frolicking around, "she loves the retirement of the strangling bush-wood."

"Poor thing! I pity her in my better moments," said a kind-hearted little Belgian, dolorously, "although she ought not to be an object of commiseration.

"Why so?" demanded Ella.

"Why do I pity her?—Is'nt it hard to be debarred from the pleasures of social or literary enjoyment, owing to imperfect mental development? Would'nt you, Miss Ella, pity yourself if your life were a life-long lethargy, your faculties in a normal torpor, and yourself dead alike to emotions of gladness or sorrow."

"But, Rosa," interposed Mary Kensella, "if Theresa were capable of making all these nice distinctions, she would no longer be the happy innocent that she is. Her few wants are easily satisfied,—her moral accountability is nominal—

in fact your sympathies would be put to better account in bewailing the dangers that beset the path of a reasonable, impulsive girl. For that same reason," she added, meditatively, "although an inestimable boon, is a fearfully delicate deposit."

"Now, Mary, give us a lecture on the awful responsibility of reasoning and reasonable animals—please do?" interrupted another, with just enough of irony in her tone to indicate that she dreaded such a consummation.

"Follow my lead, and leave reason to the graduates," said a black-eyed, nimble creature, springing before the rest, "I will conduct you the shortest way," and laughing and shouting the whole quorum dived after their maiden-captain. Soon they reached the designated spot, where, sitting on the trunk of a fallen linden, was the subject of their search.

A look was sufficient to convince you that some of Theresa's mental powers were wanting. Her gaze was very compresive, taking in many things at a glance, but alas! it was unmistakably evident that the tablet of her memory never lost its virgin hue. Her lips were remarkably full, one of them being sufficient to make an ordinary mortal a pair. In general she held them apart, possibly with a feminine, consequently excusable, determination to exhibit her amber teeth.

There were some seven or eight mischievous youngsters around her, wreathing garlands of linden-leaves and placing them on her brow.

"Now, Theresa, shouted one merry and reckless-looking, "you are a fac-simile of Marius sitting on the ruins of Carthage. If there were just a single bay-leaf to ornament your wreath, I am sure there is no laureate in the world who could look half so interesting as yourself."

"Behold the beautiful contrast!" said another, tying a necklace of large red berries about the victim's neck,"—the green and shining chaplet and the glistening coral beads."

"Expensive corals, indeed," ironically echoed a third, "but the effect I admit is superb."

"Theresa, Theresa," exclaimed a member of the approaching corps, "who is this young lady in our company?"

Theresa cast a sheepish glance at Ella, suddenly dropped her eye, and opened her mouth as if to speak. All bent eagerly to catch the words of wisdom, but forgetting her original purpose, coolly and deliberately the lips descended and met.

"Answer, Theresa," reiterated the speaker, affecting a show of indignation.

"I don't know," was the calm response, as she ventured a premeditated look.

"You don't know," thundered the volunteer leader; "you don't know your own aunt?—your mother's step-father? Shame, Theresa, shame! Who is she, I ask you again?"

Now Theresa's wits were sadly put to the test. Step-father and aunt were mingled promiscuously in her thoughts; so, with a faint idea to establish a reputation for originality, with unaffected simplicity she answered:

"She is my mother's son."

"Are you sure?" interrogated Mary Kensella.

"I think so," was the unhesitating reply; but then Theresa's articles of faith were propagated in "thinks."

Ella laughed, and even Theresa seemed to enjoy the joke.

In the course of time they left her alone in her verdant glory, and sauntered off to exercise themselves at the gymnasium. Some sought the "escarpolette," others the Giant's Steps, and others again, less aspiring, contented themselves with the lowly evolutions of the "flying-Dutchman."

Thus flowed the tide of Ella's life in the Convent. It is true that after a few days she had to take part in active scholastic duties; but when she bade her brother a final adieu before his departure for America, she told him to inform the cherished ones at home, that she loved the place already, and would be as happy there as she possibly could be while separated from her parents and friends. Arthur would fain see Mary before trusting his fate to the waves; but when Ella sought her and made known his request, she laughed merrily, telling her to bid him a hearty God-speed, and ask him to deliver some little mementoes of her own workmanship to her mother, of which Ella was elected the bearer. Fond was the parting between the brother and sister; the grief of the latter returned with crushing intensity; and it was only by the kindness of the Sisters and girls, and in the lapse of many days, that she recovered her usual cheerfulness, or rather sociability.

CHAPTER V.

AN ARRIVAL.

One day, during recreation hour, a group, of which Ella was the central figure, was seated on benches in the yard, discussing various subjects, and relating divers tales, when Sister Angelique came up flourishing a letter on high, and playfully demanding who would wish to learn foreign news?

The girls arose in eager expectation, each hoping that the enviable epistle was for herself; but an end was soon put to their suspense by observing it directed, in a neat but florid hand, to Miss Ella Grosvenor, Notre Dame, Namur. The eyes of the recipient sparkled, for she knew that it was from Mariette Austin, and, begging to be excused, retired to read it in the privacy of the cedar arbor.

Meanwhile Sister Angelique seated herself among the young ladies, keeping her watchful eye, however, on the restless high-fliers who were seeking amusement in other than sedentary pursuits.

"O, Sister Angelique," whispered Nettie Armand, almost shrinking from the sound of her own hollow voice, "Ella was relating such a fearful story of Indian depredation."

"Indeed!" echoed Sister Angelique, feigning the climax of interest, "and pray, Nettie, what was the burden of her tale."

This interrogatory was exactly what Nettie desired. She would travel, if possible, a league to be present at the recital of a ghost story; and then her greatest pleasure was to retail it again to as many listeners as she could collect.

"Sister," she answered, her voice waxing strong, and her eye brightening, "I am afraid I can not do justice to it, but still I will try my best. Ah! I shudder as I think!

"Many, many years ago, in a dense and lonely forest, dwelt a family of white pioneers. A river ran through the wood. The nearest friendly habitation was half a mile away. They had three stalwart boys, a daughter, and a child, a beautiful infant, almost eighteen months old. The father was hale

and stout, the mother an invalid, scarcely ever leaving the house, which was constructed of trunks of trees, and designated the log cabin. They lived in peace, undisturbed by the wrathful red man, till the time of which I speak, a series of some fifteen years. Then, in one of the far-off cities, the whites had betrayed the confidence of the Indians, and put numbers of them to death. So the chiefs of this region sat in council, and determined to wreak a summary vengeance on the unoffending families around. Accordingly, they collected together their young and thirsty braves, and an aged sachem, leaning for support against a tree, told them that the temples of their fathers were desecrated; that the blood of the natives of the soil was given to nourish the earth; that the trees of the forest were felled by the hand of the white man; that the bones of their chieftains were bleaching on unhallowed ground; that their wampum-belts were taken; that their arrows and scalping-knives were lying in the white man's house. Go forth, he said, and the Great Spirit will aid you. Go forth and seek redress. Make the pale-face"—

At this moment a rustling was heard among the leaves of the lindens that protected them from the sun. The narrator sprang in terror to her feet; but the imaginations of her listeners being considerably less vivid, they coolly retained their positions, while, at the same instant, Nettie encountered the innocent gaze of a bird balancing himself on a branch.

"Ruthless invader," quoth Sister Angelique, jocosely, addressing the warbler. "Continue your recital, Nettie, I must confess that I really begin to be interested." Nettie needed no second invitation; subsiding quietly into her vacated place, she resumed:

"It was far advanced in the autumn time when the Indians came to this determination. They selected that very night for the descent; so, when the old harvest moon was high in the heavens, and the west winds were slumbering in the decaying trees, they sallied forth, thirsting to retaliate on the unsuspecting pale-face. Thickly covered with a carpet of yellow leaves, the dense and ancient forest refused to echo their treacherous steps; the family was sleeping, unconscious of pending ill, till twenty well-tempered tomahawks prostrated the cabin-door. With a short, shrill cry of anguish, the trembling victims jumped from their couches of repose. The males grasped their trusty carbines, and in less than sixty

seconds four muscular Indians measured their lengths on the ground. Maddened by the sight of their bleeding brethren, the savages rushed on the youths; a decisive struggle ensued; ferocity and numbers were victorious; the father and his noble boys weltered in a pool of their blood. With a wild halloo the barbarians fiercely tore off their scalps, plunged a dozen knives into the bosom of the maiden, and seizing the little boy, carried him to their wigwams, leaving the feeble mother alone to keep watch with her dead."

"What a terrible circumstance," exclaimed one who had recently joined the group, and barely heard the catastrophe."

"An atrocious punishment," said Sister Angelique, "to inflict on that mother's heart. A million times would she rather have ceased to exist than to see the bodies of her cherished ones mangled before her eyes."

"The old tradition of the country affirms," continued Nettie, "that the waters of the neighboring river became of a purple tint, although not one drop of the blood of the murdered could possibly have reached its banks. Moreover, it avers that yearly, when the autumn is nearly gone, a low wail is heard at midnight in the forest; that it becomes a voice, and distinctly articulates—'Woe, woe to the Indians who slaughtered the widow's all.'"

"And what happened to the child and its mother, Nettie?" inquired the lately arrived.

"The mother kept her vigil till the grey dawn lighted the east; then she arose, and with her own feeble hands managed to prepare a grave, in which she deposited the precious ones, who were enveloped in a common shroud. The child grew up among the aborigines, married a chieftain's daughter, and lived and died without being told his history."

Ella having finished the perusal of her letter, at this juncture rejoined her companions. She had previously spoken to them of Mariette Austin, and now she informed them of her travels in the vicinity of their own sunny clime. It has perhaps puzzled the reader to think how Miss Grosvenor succeeded in a foreign school, with regard to the spoken dialect; but it should be borne in mind that her French education had not been neglected at home. She was well versed in the rudiments of Europe's softest language, and practice was all that was necessary to render her delivery not only easy but fluent. The same may be said in favor of Mariette Austin.

Two months glided away from Ella. During that time

her employments were studying and reciting lessons; gleaning useful and ornamental knowledge; making rapid progress in music, for her abilities in that direction were undeniably great, and daily becoming attached to her new home and its inmates. She found in Sister Angelique a friend in whom to confide, and the amiable and sympathizing Nun had obained unconsciously quite a footing in her heart. Naturally reserved, with a temperament inclined to the melancholy, Ella occupied a considerable portion of her recreations in reading or conversing with Mary Kensella and a few other kindred souls. She corresponded regularly with her parents; nor was she forgotten by Mariette, who weekly sent her glowing accounts of her wanderings amid the Alpine snows, or along the verdant banks of the Rhine, or through the intricate windings of the cities of the French. By the last account she was in Rome, proud, haughty, but crumbling; *once* the home of the Cæsars, *now* the residence of the Popes. She said that curiosity and a desire of investigation led her to examine the catacombs. Much she had heard from her earliest childhood about these famous resorts of the young and persecuted Christians, and now that it was in her power to explore them, certain inconveniences were overlooked, and accompanied by her grandfather, she wended her way through these dismal abodes of the dead. But let us quote a paragraph from her last written interview with her friend.

"Ella, I have an incident to relate to you, the memory of which will only die with myself. We were timorously treading our path through a ghastly array of monuments, rising up amid the ever-reigning darkness, like white-shrouded ghosts in a dreary winter's night, when the moans, as of one in agony, struck pitifully on our ears. 'Infinite Goodness, have mercy—forgive me,' were the words continually repeated, but in tones so hollow, sepulchral and beseeching, that the tears came unbidden to our eyes. Advancing, we beheld the body of a man, completely muffled in his cloak, stretched in penitential attitude upon one of the prominent graves. The dimensions and voice struck us forcibly; our glances met for an instant, my grandfather's and mine, but fell unanswered to the ground. The petitioner by this time became aware of the proximity of strangers. With sudden haste he arose and confronted us for a single instant. There was no mistaking those dazzling, jet-black eyes, the haughty step and bearing—Ella, *it was the father of Alphonsus*,

begging pardon over a martyr's tomb. Grandpa essayed to speak to him, but he was gone, so soon and so mysteriously, that I am still in doubt whether it was his shadow or not.

"How strange is that man's story—I would give hundreds to unravel the web. During our voyage we knew every mortal on board, it would appear, with the exception of him and his wife. Not even the mention of his name ever echoed in our ears. Ella, I am puzzled, and the only word to express my feelings is—strange—strange—strange."

Some two weeks after the reception of this intelligence, Ella, found herself doubly surprised—first, because she had not heard from Mariette, and secondly, because she was summoned to the parlor, the reason for which she could not divine—having no acquaintances in Namur, till she found two arms flung around her neck, and herself in the hearty embrace of Mariette Austin. She greeted Mr. Clarendon as she would an esteemed and welcome relative, and her impetuous friend as a part of her very self. "O, Ellie," exclaimed Mariette, as soon as she could recover nerve to speak, "I have been so lonely and unhappy without you. When viewing these grand un-American-like sights, I missed you sadly from my side; while climbing up the seven hills of Rome, you were not there to share my toil, nor did you see the pale, round moon of Switzerland silvering over the beautiful snow. Indeed, Ellie, my pleasure lost half its sweetness because you were away."

"And do you imagine, Mariette, that I never thought of *you?*" asked Ella, with simple earnestness—"I did, and when joy was at its highest, and mirth was loudest, I regretted that you were not here to share in my school-day delights. But suppose," she added, half seriously, half jocosely, "that being here, you would remain here for good?"

Mariette looked bewildered, turning abruptly to her grandparent, and said:

"Why, grandpa, that is surely the most feasible idea yet. We were concocting all sorts of wild schemes to take you back with us, Ella, it never once striking us that I could stay here. But no," she continued, recollecting herself on a sudden, "I would not leave my dear old grandfather to find his way back to America alone," and bending over, she affectionately kissed his hand.

"My beloved child," said Mr. Clarendon, moved by this exhibition of tenderness, "if you desire to remain, your wish

shall be gratified. Do not think of me. You will have to complete your education somewhere, and with Ella I think you would be happy, that is," he concluded smilingly, "if she is of the opinion that the spirit of the Institution would agree with your comical tastes."

"It would, decidedly so," answered Ella, with emphasis.

"Then we will consider the subject—for the present let us talk of other things."

"But why is it, Mariette," inquired Ella, "that you never gave me the slightest intimation of your intention of visiting me."

"Why," she answered, laughing merrily, "why indeed, but I intended to give you a pleasant surprise. Oh! it is so agreeable to throw an air of mystery around some of a body's doings. Grandpa and I were speculating largely upon what Ella would be likely to think." "Perhaps, my garrulous prattler," interposed Mr. Clarendon, "we are detaining Miss Grosvenor from her duty. Remember, dear Ellie, that school visits and parlor visits are widely different affairs."

"Well, well," exclaimed Mariette, rising, "I am surely forsaken by my wits to-day. We will drive over to-morrow, Ellie, and acquaint you with our determination."

"I earnestly hope it will be according to my desires," said Ella, with emotion; "Mariette, it is hard to think of parting with you so soon."

"I shall make strict inquiries concerning the customs and regulations of the Academy," the gentleman replied, "and if the result accords with my ideas of a genuine Boarding School, I will have no difficulty in permitting Mariette to remain."

And so they departed. Mr. Clarendon, in virtue of his promise, made "strict inquiries concerning the customs and regulations of the Academy," and found them to accord with his ideas of a genuine Boarding School. Mariette commenced preparations immediately, and within a week after the above cited conversation, she was inaugurated a regular member of the Institution of Notre Dame. Of necessity the first few days were fruitful in heart sickness and sighs; but soon these unpleasant feelings wore away, and the Convent at Namur ingratiated itself in her bosom so effectually, than in less than a month she was its warmest advocate and friend.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PASTOR.

The moon was out: the clouds were hung
In circles dark across her way,
And many a tiny starlet shone
Upon the night with feeble ray.

"CAN Father Dominick be seen?" demanded Mr. Kensella, one bleak, mid-winter's day, of the porter who opened the door of a Religious House.

"Step in sir, and I will tell you in an instant," was the reply, while Mr. Kensella, without heeding the invitation, steered directly towards the comfortable little parlor to the left. On opening the door he drew back, as if partially amazed, but quickly recovering himself, walked smilingly in, bowing to the worthy Pastor, who was surrounded by a dozen poor outcasts of his flock.

"Father Dominick and the destitute, are expressions never to be separated," whispered Mr. Kensella in the good Priest's ear.

"The day is never cold enough to freeze your warm jokes," was the slightly rebukative reply.

It was in reality a moving sight to behold that squalid and half-clothed mass of humanity, clustered about the benevolent distributor of hope. Some on their knees, were imploring the benediction of Heaven on his head; a few caught hold of the skirts of his garments; others again, more vehement in their demonstrations of affection, ventured to seize his hand and impress on it burning kisses of regard. He had been distributing material and spiritual assistance, and was discovered in his praiseworthy occupation by the appreciative Mr. Kensella.

Slowly the medicants retired, casting back furtive glances of gratitude on the Priest. When the last had disappeared, and the whistling icy breeze was excluded by the oaken door, the two sat down by the fire, and Father Dominick, drawing his cloak around him, remarked in a melancholy tone:

"God help the poor and destitute. The rich alas, have no idea of the sufferings to which humanity is heir."

"Father," said Mr. Kensella in a mysterious voice, "she is low, too low indeed, to entertain any rational hopes for her recovery."

"I am sorry to hear it, but how progresses her daughter in science?" asked Father Dominick, after a pause.

"She bears away the first prizes; and for more than six months past, she is a devout and zealous Catholic. The other young lady, Miss Austin, of whom I have spoken to you, entered the fold some time before Ella Grosvenor."

"How long are they at Namur?" inquired the Priest meditatively.

"Nearly two years and a half," responded the addressed. "It was the original intention of Mr. Grosvenor, to let Ella remain three terms, but of course she will be recalled, now that her mother is on the point of death. She is devotedly attached to her parent; never a month speeds without bringing a letter, a most affectionate letter from Ella to her mother."

"I understand that Mrs. Kensella possesses great influence over the mind of Mrs. Grosvenor, am I not right, Richard?" interrogated the Priest.

"They have known each other from their infancy, they went to school together from childhood to youth, and we both knew from experience that these sweetest days are never forgotten, neither are the friendships we form then."

Father Dominick smiled fondly on his old class-mate and replied:

"Their memory fade but in death."

"Father, it is my intention that the girls come over together. My Mary might be a great means of encouraging and supporting Ella."

"So the last hope for the recovery of Mrs. Grosvenor is over. Tell me, Richard, does she desire to speak to a minister of God?" queried the zealous Pastor.

"At times she does," was the answer, "and in these moments of grace, my wife is ever ready, like an angel of inspiration, to persuade her to put the suggestions into practice."

"And what keeps her back?" the Father asked.

"Principally family pride, and the fear of offending her husband."

The Priest shook his head and fell into an attitude of thought. They spoke together for an indefinite time on

various subjects, and when Mr. Kensella had taken his departure, Father Dominick retired to his own room, and was soon lost in the perusal of his Holy Office.

In another section of the Union a very different scene was transpiring. When the dark, chilly, star-lit evening set in, a mansion in one of the principal streets of a flourishing city of the West, was brilliantly illuminated. Evident preparations were making for a soiree of unusual magnificence. The light of many lamps were streaming from the richly-curtained windows; sumptuous music was softly borne on the breeze, and beautiful ladies and majestic men moved hither and thither in the spacious halls. It was the house of Mariette Austin. The ball was given to commemorate her eighteenth birth-day, and also to welcome her expected arrival home. Mr. Clarendon moved along, the acknowledged prince of the assembly, for he was the projector and superintendent of this feast in honor of his beloved grandchild.

Mirth and joyousness held sway among the guests. In one apartment, the lovers of the Terpsichorean art were collected in fantastically irregular groups. Some, with graceful ease, were winding through the intricate evolutions of the dance; others, looking on smilingly, were patiently awaiting their turn, while others again, unmindful of the animated bustle around them, joined in conversation, serious or light, but in all cases, if appearances are good indices, extremely interesting.

"Mr Austin, achud, sure 'tis me that has been watching for you this long, long time," said a tidy-looking woman, as she intercepted the master of the house, leaving one joyous crowd to visit another in a different apartment.

"Indeed, Mrs. Carey, and what may be your business with me now?" responded the gentleman addressed, as he cast an inquiring look on the neatly attired person of his faithful domestic.

Mr. Austin, the father of Mariette, was probably in his forty-fifth year. He was a middle-sized, square-built man, with a searching blue eye, great business talent, and a tread almost martial in its firmness. His words were few, but when he spoke every body paid attention, and there was something peculiarly fascinating in the geniality of his smile.

"Mr. Austin, achree," continued the old and valued

domestic, "I was whaiting for you beyant that corrydor there, to ask you for lave of absence a little while. I find the evening hanging heavy on me hands, an' as Pericle, the black, wants to draw me into argiments, I thought I'd jest step across the sthreet, as far as Dinny O'Brady's, and spend a couple a'minits wid himself and his dacint wife. Besides, your honor, I hard 'um say they expects a visit from some people that isn't long landed from Ireland."

"You should have gone without demanding permission," Mr. Austin answered, "but as the night is dark, you may take Solon with you, and appoint a time for him to go back for you."

"O thin, thanks and glory be to your ginirous feelings," said Betty, dropping a profound courtesy, "'tis me that has always found you the kind an' indulgent master."

Betty turned alertly toward the kitchen quarters, and Mr. Austin resumed his intended route.

CHAPTER VII.

A SOCIAL REUNION.

Leaving the scene of festivity, we will follow Betsy Carey, who, escorted by the stalwart negro, Solon, treaded her precarious way a full round dozen squares, instead of across the street, as she represented her journey to Mr. Austin. But who will not forgive a child of holy Ireland a slight exaggeration? Finally they arrived in front of a neat brick house, where Betty halted, and giving her sable conductor a hearty blow for thanks, she bolted into the homely dwelling without the ceremonious requisition of a knock. "God save all here," was her entering salutation. "Ochone, but it is bitther and could outside. How are you thriving, Dinny, asthore, and Biddy, acushla, how's every bone in yer body? Arrah, now don't be for tearin' us asunder," she continued, as she was affectionately collared by the worthy pair and wedged into a comfortable seat before a blazing fire.

"It's we that was bewailing you this blessed evenin', Betty, aroon, said Dennis' ruddy wife, "we thought you'd never

come, but knowin' there was cumpany at the house we thought again that you would'nt fail to sthroll down. But tell me, darlint, how is the purty lassie gettin' on at the Catholic school."

"Finely entirely," answered Betty, throwing back her head as if to confirm the assertion, "it's beyant calculation the way she's thriving in that place. They tells me indeed, that there's no knowin' the great change that has come over her."

"She was a likely young woman, to be sure," spoke Dinny from his nook in the chimney corner, "I'd notice her pass up and down so graceful-like, that I could'nt help but think well of her, to say the very laste."

"But where in the wide world is these immigrants?" Betty demanded, "I declare I long to see the face of any mortal that have lately crossed the wather."

"Why thin' they'll be here in a jiffy, Betty, darlint," said Biddy O'Brady, in a soothing tone. "But whist," she continued, laying her finger on her lips, and inclining her ear in the direction of the door. "Musha, an' sure they comes, hurra, I ses, hurra!" And the expectant two arose at the same moment to welcome the expected guests.

They also were three in number. Two cherry-cheeked, sprightly-looking maidens, possibly twins, from their striking resemblance, and probably turned twenty, with a simple, pleasant-like young man of herculean stature, but, as regarded sense and forethought, a living illustration of the old adage, "still water runs deep." They were greeted with a cordial, whole-souled welcome, such as the Irish know how to give to their friends, and were soon ensconced in comfortable proximity to the fire.

They were all soon lost in legends and reminiscences, but, at a most interesting juncture, a door to the left suddenly opened, and lo! there stood before them a flushed and seemingly angry boy.

"Mother," he said, assuming a position, without deigning to cast a glance of recognition on any body save the individual addressed, "Mother, I can not keep these childre to order. Here is Tady and Mikey and Mary, all refusing to go to bed," at the same moment three curly little heads became ominously visible, one peeping through the speaker's arm, which he indignantly held akimbo.

"Mother, eroo," exclaimed Mikey, rushing in and climbing up the maternal lap, "let us listen to them stories yez are

a goin' to tell. Sure we could'nt sleep an' yez talkin' of Ireland."

"Let the poor cratures stay," interposed Betty, smiling on the young belligerents. "Sure 'tis our own young days renewed to look at the innocent darlints," she added, seizing the blue-eyed Mary and kissing her with affectionate pride.

"Well, to be sure and to be certain, but 'tis ye that are the curious childre," half soliloquized Dinny, deliberately drawing his dudeen from his great coat pocket, and knocking its mouth gently against the projecting hob. "Away with ye, you rogues, be afther yer stooleens, and come and sit inside of uz here in the corner." Without waiting further admonition, the four decamped, and shortly after returned, each, in triumph displaying his three-legged stool.

"Ah, you thief, you," said the herculean young man, shaking his fist at the delinquent Dinny, junior. "Shure you war'nt in airnest when you made that rueful complaint." Dinny, junior's, merry laugh, as he placed his pedestal at the young man's feet, bore evidence to the guilty fact.

The juveniles were cozily seated inside of the adults. Universal satisfaction was evinced; contentment, and the joy of a happy reunion, were pictured on every face. After closely questioning the "immigrants," Betty discovered to her infinite satisfaction that she knew their parents well, some twenty-five or thirty years before. The girls, named severally Margeret and Joanna, expressed their delighted astonishment, while Patsey, as they diminutively styled their anything but diminutive brother, blandly confessed that the very sight of her good-natured countenance recalled, he thought, the longest memories in his head.

Many and lengthy were the questions put by honest Betty Carey to the well-informed immigrants, questions concerning departed friends and neighbors, of old scenes and recollections; and as one story borrowed another, they finally launched into a mystic stream of well-attested traditional legends.

Those legends told by the fireside on a freezing winter's evening, how delicious they are in the retrospective! How eagerly the little ones stretched forward their heads to drink in the glorious recitals; but how oracularly and impressively they were narrated by the elders of the band, it is beyond our power to describe. In this manner was raised in the hearts of the youthful generation a reverential attachment

for Ireland, whose green banks and sunny fields they had never seen; but whose ancient glory and more recent struggles they were taught to regard with the deepest and most affectionate love.

Betty Carey was as staunch a patriot as an Irishman could desire to see. She was vindictively eloquent when recounting England's treachery, and pathetically so when she told of her country's wrongs. She loved to relate stories connected with the wars of the O'Neills and the Invasion, but her proper forte was in the narration of superhuman events. The tastes of the others were similar, and as the attention of the youngsters continued unabated, the little clock above the chimney-piece had told the midnight hour before either party had an idea it was so late. Mag and Joney made instantly for their bonnets, but the unrelenting Mrs. Cary, seizing hold of their dresses, requested them to wait awhile till she would show them what she had received from abroad. Whereupon she plunged her hand into her capacious pocket, and drew from thence a roll of well-thumbed manuscript paper.

"This," she said, "was sint to me all the way from Beljum, be me darlin, thoughtful Ettie, may the Lord be good to her and spare her to us long. It appears there's a Pennsylvany lady at her school, that loves blessed ould Ireland as well as if she was born and reared there, although, as Ettie says, she never put a fut on its sile. An' what do ye think but she makes poetry and verses about it, an' me darlint Ettie was so well plaised with this, that she sint it all the way to me. She knows well, the craythure, that I'de give me eyes out for a good song about Ireland. You must hear it, girls, before yez lave, and don't fail to give three hearty cheers for the daicent and pathriotic Miss Kinshilla that wrote it."

She handed the paper to Patsey, who, being proud of his scholarship, was in no wise unwilling to seize this opportunity of "showing off," so, siding over to the light, he read, in a melo-dramatic voice, the following:

FAREWELL TO MY NATIVE LAND.

Farewell to the Isle where my childhood was nurtured,
Where often in gladness my footsteps have strayed
When life was all new, and the bosom was tortured
By nought but the feelings by Pleasure conveyed;

When the world was an object of beauty and wonder,
And all that was in it created for love,
When the soul would sink down in its fullness and ponder
O'er scenes of bright loveliness pictured above;
When the sigh of the zephyr, the low, hollow moaning
Of winds of the north would strike sad on mine ear,
And I'd catch with breathless attention, the groaning
Of Ocean's wild sorrow when storms were near.

Farewell to that Land, to that greenest of Islands,
To its softest of skies—and wherever I roam,
Be my dwelling on earth, in the valley or highlands,
I ever will love thee, my own native home,—
I'll recall with emotions ecstatic the hours
I passed on thy borders when life was all young,
When the world wore nothing but garlands of flowers,
And the brow of the Future with laurels was hung.
Should the hand of Misfortune be heav'ly laid on me,
And Sorrow's dark mantle o'er Hope fling a screen,
And clouds from the heavens look frowningly on me,
Through all will I love thee, my Island of green.

Farewell, my own Island, the lay is but feeble
That falters adieu to thine ocean-girt shore,
But the heart that dictates it with deep feeling trembles,
And my eye is bedimmed that it sees thee no more.
Farewell once again! O may Freedom when beaming,
Cast its first, brightest sunlight on thee, lovely Isle,
May the spirit of yore, with its beautiful gleaming,
Continue to gild thee, continue to smile—
Soon again on thy mild breezes may there be streaming
The proud flag of Erin in its own native sheen;
May the records of time be thy great deeds revealing,
And *more* do I wish thee, sweet Island of Green.

After much commenting on the merits and demerits of the above effusion, and divers remarks as to the possible and impossible meaning, Patsey and his sisters were finally ready for a start, but before departure they hinted their willingness to be escorted to church on the following day by Dinny O'Brady, jr. But Betty vetoed the proceeding, and assented *her* willingness to be their guide.

"Arrah, agragal," said she, "its meself that 'ill show yez the way to Father Beechinor's to-morrow. He is a blessed man entirely, and a great friend o' mine. Ye'll all be for going to yer duty, I suppose?"

They answered in the affirmative; and, after having appointed a suitable rendezvous, the trio went joyfully on their way. The children were hastily put to bed; Solon called for Betty, and soon the house of Dinny O'Brady was as dark and silent as the tomb.

"Here, your honor's Reverence, is three immigrants jest come over from Ireland," said Betty on the following day,

as she ushered herself into the pastor's humble dwelling. "I know, yer Reverence, that's yerself is partial to the children of the Holy Isle."

A smile flitted across the placid features of the priest.

"Be seated, my children," he answered, pointing to convenient chairs; "so you have just landed on the American shores; you came over in a stormy time; even now it is fierce and angry; God help the destitute poor."

"Amin God, this day," responded Patsey, fervently. "But shure, yer Reverence, isn't it a ragion of a country altogether that you have got here, so different entirely from the land we left behind."

Another quiet smile passed over Father Beechinor's countenance. He was still a young man, of medium stature and rather prepossessing appearance. His eyes were dark and very full, unearthly in their expression, that is to say, you could immediately conjecture that his thoughts were of another world, and the leading interest of his life, to prepare others for that "better land."

"Father Beechinor, yer Reverence," said Betty, perceiving that the priest made no answer, "these likely childre of a saintly country, are wanting to make their pace with God in the new world. But arrah, agra, after all, shure its bether for them to be here than there, for would'nt it melt a heart of stone to think of the disasthers that's daily falling upon Ireland."

"To what disasters do you refer, Mrs. Carey," questioned Father Beechinor; "do you speak of spiritual or temporal disasters?"

"Of both, yer Reverence, of both," she quickly retorted; "only look at what the soupers are doing to dhrag the Irish from the Church of Rome; just look at the bribes and Judas-money they are offering for their sowls! Look at the disthrainments and extortions the villianous landlords is practicing on the struggling tenintry. Look at the superhuman sufferings the poor is undergoin, and for all, thank God, they are faithful to their Religion and their Lord! Death afore dishonor, is what escapes their dyin lips. God afore filthy lucre, they cries out, as the minister of Christ kneels at one side, poor in all but heavenly grace, and a follower of Harry the VIII. and Cromwell on the other, one of his hands stuffed wid heretic bibles and the other wid gould, to lave to his starvin family if he would renounce his God."

When Betty had ceased, it was evident that her hot, unsought for words, had struck a sympathetic chord in Father Beechinor's breast; but long ere this he had learned to subdue his feelings, to keep his emotions under control; therefore he simply answered, while his kindly eye lighted up benevolently—

"God will do his own work in his own good time. He loves whom he chastises."

After some further conversation, they adjourned to the Church, and when they left it again, it was with lightened consciences and truly grateful hearts.

On the following Sunday the O'Bradys, Betty Carey, and the Immigrants, occupied an advantageous pew in Father Beechinor's chapel. When the first Gospel was ended, the Pastor turned towards his congregation to deliver his weekly discourse. It was characteristic, concisely simple and effective. His text was the parable of the Good Shepherd, who left his faithful sheep to rescue the one that had wandered. He applied the passage to the ministers of the Gospel; touchingly described their toils; the anguish and solicitude they experienced for the unfaithful portion of their flock; how the burden of the people's sins weighed heavily on the pastor's soul. "And often, how often," he continued, "in the privacy of the Sanctuary, do I bitterly bewail the evils that I can not remedy. How often, when my unworthy hands are uplifted in prayer, does the spirit of loneliness and desolation come down, and by pointing to the recreant members of my fold, after whom it is useless to search, thus rob me of the little peace that I otherwise might enjoy. Oh, my Christian hearers, brethren in a crucified God, give up the vile habits that enslave you; listen to the voice of one whose only concern is your eternal salvation, and who only knows joy when your spiritual well-being is insured."

Then he told them how, by their return, the glory of their Maker would be enhanced; how the interests of Jesus would be furthered; how the leaden hand of sorrow would be raised from the minister's heart; and, when he concluded his eloquent exhortation, it were hard to number the moistened eyes in that humble chapel of the West. At the conclusion of the Divine Sacrifice the assembly dispersed; each wended his steps homeward in a seemingly thoughtful mood, and many, doubtless, made resolutions to amend their ways and lives.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETROSPECTION.

And if Temptation beautiful, with roses twined, should rise,
A wreath of glory on his brow, and candor in his eyes,
Oh! scorn the arch-deceiver, who so many souls has won,
And count, in mem'ry, o'er the joys of your lost Convent Home.

We left Ella Grosvenor and Mariette Austin, duly established in the Boarding-School at Namur. To obtain an insight into the characters of the girls, it is necessary to watch their movements there, for the dispositions we manifest in youth, ripen with our age; and generally the germs of good and evil appear and are nurtured or pruned during that precious time, which some so inconsiderately throw away. Ella Grosvenor, as was remarked when first we made her acquaintance, was deep-thinking and sensitive, meditative beyond her years, and what may be termed habitually melancholy; that is, she had no appetite for childish sports, and fostered rather than discarded an inclination for retirement. In certain matters she was a real enthusiast; when she loved, it was to intensity, with a devotion not to be shaken; but first she should be satisfied that the object of her affection was worthy of a home in her heart. She had a speaking eye; through its dark yet liquid beauty, you could penetrate into her very soul, and imagine you discovered its most secret workings. The artless girl was doing her utmost to school that wayward member into a respectable subjection to her will, and, so far, she flattered herself, her efforts were partially crowned with success.

Mariette's mental constitution was exactly the reverse. She was very impetuous, gracefully brisk in her manners, and generally acted on the spur of the first impulse; but, unlike others similarly endowed, she was singularly constant in her attachments. Her large, innocent-looking blue eyes were the reflex of a fun-loving disposition, and were always, like sunlight on a wave, sparkling with animation and mischief. There was more passionate devotedness and visible concentration in her affection than in Ella's, and some were not wanting, who declared it stronger and fonder. One

thing, however, was certain—it was more ostensible, more easily perceived.

Her religious views, moreover, were liberal, in the widest sense of the word. Her father, wealthy and prosperous, attended no church, while Mrs. Austin, a lover of variety, went by turns to every place of worship in town. Captain Clarendon's opinions also, were decidedly comprehensive. His avowed maxim was—let every man have his choice, and yet, inconsistent as it may appear, he had a real but latent aversion to the Catholic faith. It was owing, probably, to early associations, for spending his youth and manhood on the wild, high seas, he could not fail to encounter traducers and scoffers, who felt *that* Religion more than any other, a barrier in their way.

The third day of Mariette's conventual life, was, to her, one of bewildering enjoyment. She was a passionate admirer of music, and as it happened to be the day on which the grand High Mass of the Holy Ghost was celebrated, she heard enough to satisfy her cravings after the magnificent in art. The altar was decorated in its most beautiful attire, the lights, reflecting themselves in the drops of the chandeliers, were shown to the beholder in a thousand glittering, gorgeous colors; the flowers, the last of the season, shed a balmy fragrance through the aisles, and the sun, bursting in through the stained glass of the windows, pictured on the carpeted floor, curious and fantastic shapes. When the officiating clergyman arrived at the foot of the altar, the choir burst forth into an exultant, melodious kyrie, which, accompanied by the deep-toned notes of the organ, sent an echo of heavenly gladness through the hearts of every one present. Mariette was lost; the solemn Veni Creator transported her out of herself, and when, at the Elevation, the voices of the singers were gradually hushed, and only the strains of the organ, like whispering from afar, came slowly and indistinctly to the ear, sensations, such as she never before experienced, filled a vacuum in her mind.

After the solemn moments, during which Jesus was held up for the adoration of the faithful, another magnificent chorus, adapted to the Quid Retribuam, swelled through the vaulted temple; it was triumph, petition, consternation, abasement, and glory—such a combination as filled her soul with unintelligible, inexplicable feelings. The words of advice that fell from the lips of the Cure, were like so many

burning coals; it would appear that every sentence was framed expressly for *her*, and as she afterwards pondered and tried to elucidate, the web only became more inextricably entangled. She endeavored to persuade herself that the grandeur of the music, and the strange beauty of that strange ceremony, had overpowered her, but when Ella Grosvenor came up about an hour afterward, and laughingly demanded a reason for her visible seriousness, she stammered, blushed a little, and did not know exactly what to say. By degrees she revealed her confused impressions, and Ella acknowledged to a similar unaccountable state of mind. They ineffectually strove to clear up each other's doubts, and finally resolved to submit themselves to Mary Kensella's direction, who, of course, had a handy advice to fling in, besides delivering them from their perplexing uncertainty. Months rolled on; they heard the Catholic doctrine explained; they admired its sublime simplicity, but Ella Grosvenor, more a skeptic than her friend, shook her curly head, dropped her expressive eye, and declared herself very well satisfied with the religion her ancestors professed since the period of the "Glorious Reformation."

CHAPTER IX.

CONVERSIONS.

Oh! the days of yore have vanished,
Those unclouded, happy days,
With their deeds of martial valor,
With their troubadours and lays,—
The times when maid and warrior
Knelt before the altar throne,
And the people of all nations,
In their faith were only one.

Two years of conventual residence wrought singular changes in the young Americans, both interiorly and exteriorly. Ella, on the verge of her eighteenth summer, was the tallest of all her companions, but so slight in proportion, as to seem to need constant support, like the vine that twines

itself around the oak tree. Her long, pale features had grown fairer, it would appear; her hair became blacker by the contrast, and her eye shone almost spiritually, on account of the fire that was recently kindled therein. Ere twenty months had elapsed she was thoroughly convinced that the claims of the Catholic Church were well-founded; the false objections that had grown with her childhood faded like mists before the sun, when her Teacher, in plain language, expounded the articles of a Faith that had weathered the storms and breakers of nigh two thousand years. She was not a girl to be satisfied with bare assertions; she should have incontrovertible proof; her every scruple should be satisfied; she should be led back to the time of Christ and His Apostles, and hear the divine sayings drop from His own lips; the twelve lights of the Christian world should place their teachings before her view, and, following up the course of events, she should see that the Church was always zealous, always holy, always the Spouse of Christ, the pure dove that reclined on the bosom of the Eternal Father.

Mariette was similarly convinced, but sooner and more forcibly than Ella. Her mind, more unbiased, saw instantly into the beautiful purity of our Faith, and hotly overleaping all obstacles, she professed herself a neophyte at once. The prudent Sisters, however, refused to receive her so hastily; she must look deeper into the momentuous matter, and follow the investigations of her somewhat tardy friend. It ill suited her impetuous nature to be thus chained down, as she termed it; but submit she should, and after the lapse of some time, she acknowledged it the wiser course.

Whenever a spare moment presented itself, the two companions might be seen in a retired corner, industriously wading through volumes of forbidding aspect. They began their researches at the fountain head of Christianity, at the time when Jesus commissioned His Apostles to go forth, instructing nations and converting tribes. They followed the majestic march of that persecuted Religion; they rejoiced in the might of its increasing bands, and wept and shuddered when the barbarian's sword severed the martyr's head. They retreated with the gore-stained many into the hallowed Catacombs of Rome; they aided to screen the luminous blaze of the Gospel from the polluted gaze of those who would extinguish it for aye, and looked with sinking hearts and brimming eyes, on the rending spectacles of the arena. Later on

they beheld the monks, in their lonely cloisters, at their thankless task of transcribing; they bemoaned the ingratitude of a future age which would revile the industrious monks, and brand them as idlers and good-livers, whereas, they knew that the midnight oil was expended in the prosecution of their unceasing labors, and that the herbs of the fields were the luxuries that furnished their tables.

Then they encountered the heresies that sprang up from time to time; they saw that the light of Jesus was dimming beneath their influence, and they generously aided the Popes in expelling their authors from the Church. They learned to venerate Mary, to regard her with affectionate love, and when her rights or prerogatives were disputed, they indignantly thrust their censures upon the base presumers. Finally, they found themselves at the period of the Reformation, or Deformation, as Mary Kensella baptized it. The preceding ages had obtained their unqualified approbation; true, that there were Church members scandalous and avaricious, but they were *members*, not the *Church*, and the beautiful flame of Christianity was never hidden from their view. Like the pharos that rises from a troubled sea, calm and brilliant amid the wild excitement of the billows; so rose the light of the everlasting Church over the dark ruins of heresy and death.

Ella paused doubtingly on the threshold of the Sixteenth Century, but Mariette, plunging zealously on, learned the unhallowed motives that prompted the separatists; weighed well the shallow reasons of the dissenters; admired the rigid firmness of the Successor of St. Peter, and, ere Ella had yet made up her mind to enter the field of investigation, she declared her unwavering conviction that the Catholic Church was the spotless Bride of Christ, the repository of the unaltered Scriptures, and the faithful guardian of the dearest interests of man. By much ado she obtained the consent of her parents and grandfather to profess the Faith of the primitive believers, and would hear of no postponement to the recognition of the conversion.

The day of the Baptism was to her a memorable day. It was, in fact, an imposing spectacle to witness the sacred ceremony, which took place immediately after Solmen Benediction. There knelt Mariette at the foot of the Altar, robed in her garments of white, wrapped up in an almost angelic devotion. As a sense of the love the Almighty bore her presented itself to her mind, the big tears of gratitude

gathered in her eyes. She knew at the moment the regenerating waters were pouring, that her soul became as pure as a lily, as spotless as a Seraph's life, and, with all the ardor of her impulsive nature, she blessed and praised the Shepherd, who had brought her so tenderly to His Fold. On the following Sunday, she was admitted to her First Communion. O! the raptures she experienced when she felt her Jesus was actually reposing in her breast. Sight and hearing were employed in a blisseful contemplation, and the frequent sobs that escaped from her surcharged heart, forcibly attested that her happiness was mingled with regret for the errors of the past.

Ella witnessed the transports of her companion with feelings of secret jealousy. She was aware that a similar boon was within her own grasp; that it only required a courageous effort to tear away the veil of darkness that interposed between her and the light; but the opposition she was sure to meet from her father, partially kept her back.

True, she could calculate much upon the influence of her gentle mother, and the affection of her brother Arthur; but the former was never known to hold opinions antagonistic to her husband's, and the latter had always been noted for his childlike obedience. Still, onward she must proceed; there was an inward voice whose unceasing whisper was—"forward, forward." Vain, vain were her efforts to lull that voice to repose. At length she summoned determination to pursue her inquiries. The doctrine of the Eucharist was the only obstacle in her way, and she candidly acknowledged to her teacher, that, if that point were proved to her satisfaction, she would gladly undergo trials and tribulations, and unflinchingly acknowledge herself a child of the Catholic Church. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin afforded her no uneasiness since the first day of her arrival, when Mary Kensella so lucidly unfolded its advantages and beauties to her gaze.

One twilight evening Ella requested an interview with Sister Angelique, stating that she had certain doubts and misgivings which she would gladly have dispelled. "The moon was up and yet it was not night;" clouds of rainbow beauty fluttered in the West, and a great streak of crimson and gold encompassed the heavens like a zone. A light, pearly dew descended to sleep on the currant-boughs; a grateful wind, laden with perfume, swept through the swaying lindens,

while every thing around betokened the advent of spring It was just the time and season to discuss a sacred subject.

"Sister Angelique," said Ella, entering upon the matter instantly, "you say that Jesus is entire in every little Host that the priest distributes to the people. In the first place, I think that it has not a shadow of reason on its side; in the next, at the risk of irreverence, I deem it almost impossible."

"I admire your candor, Ella; but your speech sounds bold to a Catholic," returned the patient Nun. "You object that reason is against Jesus residing in the Blessed Sacrament. I answer, that it is *above*, not *against* reason; that it is a mystery; a mystery of love. It was the *love* of Jesus, not his human wisdom, that suggested this most amiable device. You could say, with equal justice, that the Incarnation is opposed to reason; for why should a God leave the seat of his power and majesty to become a helpless child, a despised and afflicted outcast, a subject of derision to his own? Reason can assign no cause, for surely God could have redeemed mankind by one day's sojourn upon the earth. Love and compassion for his fallen creatures were the prompting motives of the Incarnation; and love, with a yearning desire to alleviate our woes, and soothe our distresses, were those that led to the Institution of the Most Holy Eucharist. It is the delight of Jesus, says the inspired writer, to be with the children of men, and he is with us always and intimately by his sacramental presence. 'Come to me all you that are weary, and I will refresh you,' he speaks from his Tabernacle home; 'all you that are burdened, I will relieve.' O, Ella, does this touching invitation emanate from the glorified Jesus, seated at the Right Hand of his Father? No! we must advance to the steps of the lowly altar to hear that sweet and most familiar address.

"As to your second objection," she continued with a smile, "I could not in conscience attempt its refutation, because I hold, as an unexceptionable rule, that nothing is impossible to God."

"Ah! it must be so consoling to be unwaveringly convinced of the actual Presence of Jesus," remarked Ella, in a pensive voice. "If I could only believe, if my rebellious senses would be persuaded, I should be so happy; my troubles and uneasiness would be nothing; I could carry them to the altar and lay them there to engage the sympathy

of Jesus. O, Sister, pray—pray for me, that the mists may drop from my eyes, and the clear and beautiful vision of Jesus in the Eucharist become, if not intelligible, at least a welcome belief."

From and before the date of this conversation, there was an irresistible power attracting Ella to the Chapel. When there, she felt an unearthly calmness come over the troubled waters of her mind; her soul was eased of its perplexities, and, for the time being, she could not if she would, doubt of the Real Presence of the God-made man.

She read with avidity every book she could obtain treating of the Blessed Sacrament. Mariette, with bustling zeal, did her utmost to impart a share of her own fresh convictions to her friend; and Ella, at length, after patient and thorough research, announced her belief that the Catholic Church never lost its ancient purity; that it held the teachings of Christ uncorrupted by the lapse of time.

But her troubles were not over now. The consent of her parents had to be obtained, otherwise, she could not be admitted into the Shepherd's true fold.

She bethought herself of writing to her mother and Arthur, and interesting them in her behalf; so, putting her resolution into instant practice, she forwarded two most pleading epistles home. She told them of the change that had come over her opinions; declared that all her hopes of salvation were centered in becoming a Catholic, and begged them to mollify her father's stern opposition to her choice.

The answers expressed their grief and utter consternation; her father, they said, bewailed the unlucky day he was persuaded to permit her departure, and bitterly refused to give his sanction to the intended change.

This was the neophyte's first trial. Then it was that the all-sustaining power of Religion upheld her sinking heart, and its soothing influence calmed her agitated conscience. Full six months elapsed before a relenting word arrived to cheer her; months during which her supplications to heaven were unceasing. At length a letter from Mr. Grosvenor threw her into an ecstacy of delight. Although the tone was bitter and reproachful, it contained a cold consent; it said that the writer was wounded in his most sensitive part; that the conduct of his heretofore obedient child stung him to the very quick, and that now, instead of being a comfort to his declining years, she was the cause that a darksome

vista opened to his shuddering gaze. There was a blot on the name of the Grosvenors that he would to heaven he died before he beheld.

Ella's joy was so excessive that these mournful allusions fell unheeded; she had her own secret hopes of converting her father yet; of being his support and stay in the winter of an honorable old age; but these glorious anticipations she prudently left in the background, and penned such an affective, thankful letter, overflowing with devoted affection, that her parent was more softened than he would willingly acknowledge to himself.

The flood-gates of happiness were opened. Hilarity was in her every movement, and she capered and played with an innocent zest, amusing to witness in one so undemonstrative and generally placid. Mariette clapped her hands and laughingly averred that it was like a shadow of her own experience, while Mary Kensella vouchsafed to throw aside her books and join in their juvenile sports. Even Theresa was observed to lift her head with an air of importance; twice or thrice she valorously attempted to congratulate Ella, but signally failed, inasmuch as Ella was either to much preoccupied, or too inattentive to notice her abortive efforts.

Thus time sped on with the Americans. They were joyous as the birds of spring; life smiled before them, and they were almost beginning to forget that existence had its sorrows, when the astounding news reached Ella that her mother was dangerously ill. She was requested to make instant preparations for departure, and informed that Mr. Kensella would be in readiness to escort herself and his daughter home, perhaps simultaneously with the arrival of the dispatch. This information threw the friends into the utmost consternation; Mariette's grief was violent, Mary Kensella's stoical, but Ella, poor Ella, it appeared as if the fountains of feelings were sealed, so blighting and scorching were its effects. She sat passively motionless, for nearly half an hour, clutching the letter of doleful tidings; her gaze was meaningless and fixed, but suddenly shrieking "mother, my mother!" she snatched her bonnet and with a hurried, nervous tread, wended her way to the Chapel. There, scalding tears of agony came happily to her relief; she fervently implored grace to bear this rigorous visitation with becoming fortitude; asked Jesus, with passionate fervor, to spare her mother yet a little while, at least, till she would

arrive at home, but added that sweet address of the Saviour —"Father, not my will, but thine, be done."

Long did she continue her petitions, and when she issued forth from that Sanctuary of the afflicted, silver rays of resignation were emanating from her eyes. Her naturally pensive countenance was meekly sad as she walked up to Sister Angelique, and silently presented her with the letter. The Nun could not repress a sudden exclamation of surprise; her regret was visible, but quickly rallying, she applied herself to console and comfort Ella. Mary Kensella was included in her sympathetic sorrow, and during the last short week of their residence, Sister Angelique employed herself in cheering them, and infusing hope into their souls. Words are inadequate to express the emotions of Mariette Austin. She must part with her friend at length, and under such painful circumstances. But it would not do for her to betray her feelings as openly as her inclinations prompted her; it would only be adding to Ella's wretchedness, so after a few masterly endeavors, she succeeded in appearing tolerably calm.

Mr. Kensella presented himself at the Convent five days after the arrival of the dispatch, and without the slightest coloring of ceremony, announced his determination to smuggle them off instanter, without giving them any time for pouting and artificial regrets. Of course, the young ladies laughed at his business-like intentions, but Mary knew it was one of her father's manners of sympathizing with grief.

And thus Ella Grosvenor left her Convent residence after a happily checkered period of two years and a half.

CHAPTER X.

EXPERIENCES IN LIFE.

Why greener than green is the grass of the grave?
The lilies so pale on its borders that wave?
Why stiller than still is the silence around,
And holiest of holy the grave and its mound?
Why are the clouds saddest that hang o'er the tomb,
And the stars seem so plaintive that sweetly look down?
Why pauses the moon on her sorrowful way,
When she shines through the willows that shadow decay?

The voice of lamentation was heard in the halls of the Grosvenors: the wail of the motherless was borne away on the breeze. There was a sad procession of carriages drawn up before the princely residence, and soon after, a coffin draped in a sweeping velvet pall, was placed within the stately hearse. Slowly the mourners came out of the house of woe; the chamber of death was deserted. Mr. Grosvenor issued from the now desolate home of his ancestors supported on the right hand by Arthur, and attended by his little son, Louis, on the left. Grief, the darkest and most hopeless, was visible in their countenances, but it seemed to have settled down to a species of despair on the brow of the husband of the departed. To add another pang, Ella was yet upon the ocean, and the mother that loved her, with more than a mother's affection, must go down into the grave unwept by the daughter of her love. Hard thought, that, for the proud and prosperous father, but harder still another thought that preyed like a vulture on his peace. His wife had desired to die in the bosom of the Catholic Church, and he refused her request. She had heard an explanation of its beautiful doctrines from the lips of Mrs. Kensella, her childhood's friend, and now that her career was coming to a close, she wished to become a member of its fold. True, the petition was not pressed in urgent terms, but he had refused it; and now that the eyes of the partaker of his joys and troubles were sealed forever in the "sleep that knows no waking;" that her ears were deaf to his relenting voice, ruthless remorse arose and mockingly reproached him for denying her last request.

When the coffin was being lowered into the unconsecrated earth, a faint shriek of anguish burst from Arthur's lips; Louis, fully realizing his bereavement, wept bitterly and long, but Mr. Grosvenor saw the grave filled up without manifesting the agony that consumed him, save by once or twice striking his burning forhead, and then looking with a mysterious earnestness to the sky. The beholders pitied him, but their offers of condolence were either coldly rejected or unheedingly received. When all, save himself and his family, had retired from the melancholy scene, Mr. Grosvenor, kneeling on the cold and new-made mound, solemnly promised the shade of his beloved partner, to offer no obstacles to their daughter, in the practice of the religion of her choice. This he considered an heroic atonement, as he had previously determined to win her back to her abandoned faith.

Ella stood beneath the paternal roof a few days after her mother's burial, the mother who had always been her idol, a paragon of perfection in her eyes. But she was gone now, gone forever from her earthly vision, gone while she was hastening to receive her last embrace! Inexpressible anguish! It required all her new-found fervor and total reliance on the All-powerful One, to support her in her trying situation. It was a melancholy household; gloom and sadness reigned over it for months. When Ella played, the indistinct and trembling cadence declared the struggles of her heart, and when she attempted to sing, her voice was like the sound of an Æolian harp, sweet, but affecting, and suddenly stopping betimes.

The Spring of the year was returning; the beautiful verdure of May clothed the valleys and the hilltops; nature was beginning to assume her regal robes of green. The inhabitants of Grosvenor's Hall were assembled in their spacious parlor, each affectionately endeavoring to comfort the other, but all failing in their benevolent designs. At length Mr. Grosvenor asked Ella and Arthur to sing him the favorite duett of the departed: they dutifully complied, but their quivering voices too plainly betrayed the emotions of their souls. When the grief-burdened lay was concluded, he silently arose from his seat, kissed the pale brows of his children, and, without uttering a syllable, retired to his own chamber. Arthur withdrew soon afterward, and Ella and Louis were left the lonely occupants of the room. The boy, now in his tenth year, was reclining drowsily on a sofa. It

was far advanced in the night; the full, young moon was in the zenith, and her beams, soft and shadowy, creeping through the half-opened casements, revealed the form of Ella prostrated in humble prayer. Suddenly she started up; a wild beauty shone in her hazel eye, and hurriedly tossing back the jetty ringlets from her face, she went over to her brother, and gently awakening him, told him prepare to bear her company for a walk.

"Why Ellie!" exclaimed the child, surprised and somewhat confounded, "it is more than twelve o'clock."

"No," returned his sister, smiling, "it is only after eleven, and I would be there before the midnight hour."

"Where, Ellie?" was the very natural inquiry.

"At the grave-yard to be sure. But hasten, Louis, you are not afraid, I hope, to visit your mother who is sleeping there?"

This half hinted doubt of his courage was too much for the manly boy, so seizing his cap, he was ready for the journey in a minute.

"Tread lightly, Louis, don't let Papa hear your step," said Ella, in a warning and slightly hollow voice.

"Would'nt you like Arthur to accompany us also?" hesitatingly demanded her brother.

"Let him take his rest—he has trouble enough on his mind. But hasten—we tarry too long."

Through the dense and fragrant foliage of the ancestral domain, the two stole cautiously, lest perchance, they should disturb the watchful warden of the place. The night wind whispered through the blossoming leaves; the pale, bright rays of the round and, Ella thought, sorrowing moon, struggled through the clustered boughs, and fell upon the graveled walks like showers of diamonds and pearls. Quietly and silently they pursued the moss-covered path that wended its course to the grave-yard.

Ella clapsed her brother's hand, but her thoughts were away, away beyond that star-gemmed heaven, with the mother who had gone to her rest. Their hasty pace soon brought them to their destination. Ella relaxed her hold, and, passing, unnoticed the many magnificent monuments that anon obstructed her way, she arrived at length at her mother's resting place. Falling on her knees and burying her face in her hands, she was lost in an instant to the stern realities of the earth.

Louis, leaning against the ghastly marble, wept tears of boyish anguish, and, "mother, mother," broke sadly, at intervals, from his lips. An immense and beautiful willow bent over that honored grave; the earliest flowers of the season bloomed around its margin, and the evergreen myrtle, bathed in silver moonbeams, trailed negligently at the base of the stone. Oh! it is a solemn thing to visit the homes of the departed when only the winds and the stars and the spirits are witnesses of the deed. It is rash and imprudent, the cautious will assume, but what will not thoughtless love go through to nestle nigh the object of its affections, even though that object is rigid with the rigidity of death? There was not a sensation of fear in the soul of Ella Grosvenor during her lonesome journey thither, and when there, on her mother's grave, she felt that the angels were keeping their sleepless watch.

"Mary," said Ella, to Miss Kensella, on the following morning, "I had such a beautiful dream last night. No—it was not a dream—it was a reality: it happened, Mary, while I was praying over my mother's grave."

"Praying, Ella, on your mother's grave, last night!" echoed her companion, not a little puzzled, "I fancy your imagination is flying off in a tangent."

"Not in the least," and she related the history of their midnight walk.

"And what was your vision, pray," demanded Mary, with visible curiosity.

"It was this," and Ella's eyes meanwhile were fastened on a lifelike portrait of her parent, "I may have been praying for a considerable length of time, when the united sound of lute and harp and guitar and all the softer instruments of music, were borne to my ear. Angelical voices were singing to the tiny notes, and I was beginning to be entranced, when a cloud of silver glory gradually sundered, and I beheld in the middle of a cluster of Saints, my mother, happy, and resplendent with the beauty of the elect; I thought I screamed and extended my arms. She smiled so gently, Oh! that smile, Mary, and beckoned me forward towards her, but when I attempted to go, the action recalled me to myself, and there I was, extended on the geeen sod that covers her dear remains."

"I hope there was truth in the semblance," rejoined Mary, after a moment's pause.

"I am confident that there was—should I believe otherwise, my life would be unendurably bitter."

A negro servant entered at this crisis, bearing two letters on a silver salver. Ella seized them with avidity, and pressing them to her lips, exclaimed—

"From Sister Angelique and Mariette; come hither Mary, I hold no secrets from you," and soon the mutual friends were absorbed in the perusal of their contents.

Sister Angelique's, as might be expected, was comprised of matronly advices and affectionate inquiries after her health, spiritual concerns, etc.; Mariette's was sprightly, and written in one of her merriest moods. She told Ella that she would go to see her "like a thief in the night," when she was least expected; may be her visit would be distant or soon; at any rate she warned her to be on her guard, for her grandfather had returned to Namur, and was only waiting to carry her home in triumph. Moreover, she informed her that the scholastic year was making strides towards its completion; that she was a prospective star, and was to bear the best prizes away.

"Ettie was in one of her moods while inditing that, I'll warrant you," remarked Mary, laughingly; "I suppose she penned it after her interesting chit-chat with Sister Angelique."

"It might be," responded Ella, quietly: her thoughts were conveyed back to the peaceful retirement of Notre Dame. A spell of the olden times came over the companions; they called up all the sunny memories of the past, and before Mary Kensella and Ella Grosvenor got through with their "don't you remembers," the hour was respectably late.

The wild storm of grief that swept over the hearts of the Grosvenors was beginning to die away, and the hoarse moan of its receding billows became more echo-like and indistinct. The calm that succeeded was a calm of sadness, for the wrecks of many hopes were visible on the interior surf-beaten shores. But the station of the family forbade the seclusion which their inclinations coveted; it was necessary that they should mix a little in society, and Ella's unwillingness faded before her father's wish.

Arthur by this time had perfectly mastered the law. He was a young man of brilliant parts; his splendid oratorical powers had already won him golden opinions, and his friends

were not slow to predict a glorious future for the promising youth. The literati of the city and environs were his companions; his acquaintance was eagerly sought, and the hospitable mansion of his father was ever open to welcome whom he chose to introduce. On the occasion of his twenty-third birth-day, a select party assembled in Grosvenor Hall to celebrate its anniversary with becoming pomp. The evening wore pleasantly away. Ella, habited in a rich, black satin robe, draped tastefully in the mourner's crape, with her tall, slim figure, her massive ringlets and radiant eyes, was undoubtedly the acknowledged but unconscious queen of the meeting. She moved among the beauty and fashion present with an abstracted, preoccupied air, the air of one whose thoughts are with the beings and things of the past. When an introduction took place, she bowed with a native grace, spoke affably to the presented, and a moment afterward, perhaps, her memory was oblivious of the fact that an introduction had occurred.

But was she similarly unnoticed? Did her singularly modest deportment make no impression on other minds? Did that pale, sad countenance, tranquil as a sorrowing angel's, not engrave itself on sympathetic and pitying souls? It were preposterous to conceal the truth, for the youth and intelligence of Philadelphia were present that night in Mr. Grosvenor's dwelling.

When Ella was asked to play, there was a majestic form beside her, gazing on with a dreamy earnestness, and seeming to wish to second the invitation; when she sang, two large, blue, devotional eyes were riveted on her face; if she danced, every motion was watched with wonder or fascinated awe.

"Rivali," said Arthur, coming up to him who was thus so totally absorbed, "Rivali, are you preparing the lecture you are to deliver next week? May be its subject would be 'The Emotional Powers and Susceptibilities of Man.'"

The addressed startled slightly, look expressively at Arthur for a moment, and smiled—a smile so full of meaning and affection, that you would hardly expect it from a male.

"I see very well that you are away in the land of illusory phantoms," continued young Grosvenor, with an evident determination to banter his meditation-loving friend, "but, Richard, on an evening like this, it is only natural that I should desire to accompany you in your flights. Will you join me in a game of chess.

"Not now, Arthur, not now;" returned Rivali, deprecatingly; and well it was for his peace of mind that at this juncture, Arthur's eye caught a glimpse of Mary Kensella, who had only just arrived. He made rapidly towards her, and in her society forgot alike the reflective Rivali and the mirthful youths and maidens around.

After that evening, rich in pleasant recollections to many, the visits of Richard Rivali became gradually more frequent at Grosvenor Hall. Often he would stop for tea, and, by the almost extinguished twilight, canter back into the city in a deeply abstracted mood. One bright night he prolonged his stay far beyond the usual hour; sometime previously, Ella, begging to be excused, had withdrawn, and Richard, probably feeling that his center of attraction was wanting, soon after signified his intention of preparing for the road. Arthur accompanied him to the end of the shaded avenue, and affectionately wishing him "good night and pleasant dreams," returned to his father in the parlor. The silent moon was shining upon Rivali's pathway; he had let the reins drop carelessly on the neck of his Arabian steed, and with one hand resting against his prominent forehead, he thoughtfully and leisurely pursued his lonely way. As he passed the Cemetery, with its willows and its marble monuments, he imagined that he heard a voice arise from its interior depths. Stout-hearted as he was, his soul fainted within him; all the ghost stories familiar to his childhood rushed unbidden to his mental view; but scorning to retreat from a fancied danger, he reigned in his horse, and peering through the iron bars of the gateway, he descried through the long arcade of trees, two females at a distant grave. One weeping and praying, while the other, evidently an inferior, stood protectingly near. Rivali shuddered as he heard a few disconnected phrases, and murmuring to himself "it is she," he gave spurs to his lagging charger, and was soon in his city home.

CHAPTER XI.

VISITORS.

Brightly the harvest moon sails through the heaven,
  Cleaving through cloudlets of ominous hue,—
Camly the darkness before her is driven,
  Pure she appears to our dim-stricken view.

But this pale queen of the harvest beside thee
  Is misty and shrouded, O mother of light,—
Let thy mild radiance henceforward beguide me
  Through this life's starless and cloud-fleckered night.

The hand of November was gathering the leaves from the trees of the American forests. Their sereness and the almost unimaginable variety of their tints, presented a picture of beauty to the most fastidious eye. It was early in the afternoon. Mr. Grosvenor and Arthur were transacting their business in the city, while Ella, sorrowful and musing, was seated by her silent harp. Anon, her fingers swept over the vibrating strings, and the action, although mechanical, was generally followed by a plaintive snatch, like the music that the wind makes among the northern pines. Her thoughts were alternately with her buried mother and her friends across the sea. Oh! who, amid the struggles of life, has not a green spot in his memory, dedicated to the recollections of the days that are no more? the hours, the years of his school-time? Who can look back upon that happy period without sweet, half-regretful emotions deluging his mind? Not Ella Grosvenor, surely, as she sat by her harp that unclouded November afternoon.

Suddenly the hall-door bell was thrown into a series of convulsions by a succession of impatient jerks. The wondering waiter was instantly on the alert to answer the undignified summons, and soon confronted a strange young lady, who hurriedly demanded to be shown to Miss Ella.

"Come hither grandpapa," she whispered, "it will be a delicious surprise."

The attendant, petrified by the visitor's imperious and uncompromising tone, led the way to the drawing-room, and throwing open the door, forgot himself so far as to stand

before the company with open mouth and eyes, an amusing personification of astonishment. A glance from his mistress, however, recalled him to himself; in the next instant she recognized Mariette Austin. Fond was the greeting of the school-mates; mutely they embraced, till tears at length, tears of pure maiden joy, dimmed their mutually questioning eyes. Ella welcomed Mr. Clarendon as she would an honored relation, and her frank, respectful demeanor raised her greatly in the honest Captain's estimation. After assisting Mariette to unrobe, she ordered the domestics to unfreight the traveling carriage. In the course of time the males of the family came home. Arthur was delighted to renew the acquaintance of Mr. Clarendon, and the master of the house, being an extensive exporter, and otherwise connected with the sea, was quite taken up with the conversation and bearing of the excellent naval officer.

Mariette and Ella hurried themselves into an alcove hard by, where they were effectually screened from observation. There the meeting scene was rehearsed. It was long before either could find language to express her sentiments, but when it came, told her sympathizing companion all about her mother's death. That sad topic being disposed of, and Mariette having afforded all the consolation in her power, she drew closer to her friend, and sketched an outline of her life since the moment of their parting at the Convent.

"It was a night of horror," she continued, finishing a description of the day by a thorough-going climax, "for most awfully frightful visions haunted my uneasy slumbers. I was unrefreshed and exhausted on the following morning. Ah! Ella, if I could only tell you half of what I endured."

"But what can I say of the acuteness of my sufferings?" said Ella, taking advantage of a pause, "I felt as if a thousand swords were rending my soul asunder. First, my mother dangerously sick, would I overtake her alive?—then leaving you for awhile—bidding adieu to the Sisters and my dear companions, perhaps forever—breasting a wintry sea in a shell of a vessel—but why seek to recapitulate? Only for the kind attentions of Mary, and the blustering good offices of her father, I can not surmise how my ominous journey would end."

"Leaving out these aggrieving circumstances, our stream of existence flowed smoothly along," resumed Mariette, catching up the thread of her interrupted narrative. "The

competitions passed off gloriously, and at the grand exhibition I figured a prominent character, which streak of good fortune I owed mainly to the absence of Mary Kensella and yourself. By my letters you know everything till the period of my exit from school.

"I left my Convent residence, where three happy years had been spent, on the morning of August the 18th. Grandpa and I sat in council. I was for turning the bowsprit towards home immediately, but my venerable relative would have the helm in that direction."

"'Come to the city of Venice,' he said, 'and look from the Bridge of Sighs at the palace of the Doges. Have a sail, on the blue Adriatic, in a gondola of state: look at these seventy-two islands, the pearls of the deep, and, as a further inducement, I will lead you up to the door of the majestic St. Mark's.' Ella, could you resist that more than logical argument? The bait was too tempting for me, and I yielded, shall I say to the seduction."

"Just as you please, Miss Graduate," said Ella, with an approving smile.

"I went to Venice then, and sailed through its ocean streets; and, Ella, I visited the Church of St. Mark. After adoring and thanking our Lord for his numberless benefits, I proceeded to examine and admire the magnificent temple. Grandpa led the way to the great high altar, and we were just about to engage in propagating florid opinions, when something like uneasy moanings attracted our attention. We were surprised, for we imagined the holy place deserted; and casting our eyes towards an altar to the left, we discovered near the shadow of its foot, the kneeling figure of a man. We exchanged glances, grandpapa and I; an idea, we knew it was the same, flashed simultaneously through our minds, and we held our breath until the effort became too distressingly painful. Although it was the middle of summer, an ample cloak enveloped his prostrate person—we had seen that cloak before; but we heard the voice, that voice out of many, and our gratuitous suspicions were confirmed. We made sundry unnecessary movements; jostled to and fro, and interchanged a few audible words. Our stratagem succeeded. The individual raised his head, and, Ella, we saw the face, the eye, the brow—it was—*the father of Alphonsus!*"

A cry of surprise broke from the listener's lips, and

"Mariette, did you not speak to him?" she asked, with a flush of curiosity tinging her colorless cheek.

"Not a word, Ella," was the emphasized reply. "We could not; there was something in his manner that absolutely forbade approach. He seemed to recognize us, too—he met us before, you know; but quickly rising from his prostration, he instantly vanished from the church. I fain would follow him and trace him to his destination, so great was the curiosity he inspired; but grandpapa, more honorable, sternly vetoed the attempt.

"'Let him go in peace,' he whispered; 'his secret is his own.'

"True," I responded, but a sigh arose from a depths of a frustrated impulse.

The girls here commenced a series of conjectures concerning the strange family whose acquaintance they made first on the sea. Of course, their suppositions were chaotic, and wondering if the mystery would ever be revealed to them, they glided the conversation into a channel more expansive and free.

During the evening meal, time passed pleasantly. A few facetious neighbors sauntered in after tea, who had their humorous anecdotes to relate, and others to hear in return.

On the ensuing morning, Mary Kensella hastened, on the wings of friendship, to welcome back Mariette to the American soil. After the greeting, her first inquiries were of the school, the teachers, the pupils, and she almost forgot her philosophical nature in the eagerness with which she listened to every minute detail. No ordinary character, in truth, was Mary Kensella. Beneath an exterior of the most passive indifference, she carried a sensitive and observing soul. Her thoughts were deep and accurate, her understanding of the finest cast, and her mental powers of almost masculine strength. Seldom, very seldom, were her emotions permitted to be visible; they were, in fact, under an iron control.

"Ettie, dearest," she urged in an unusually winsome manner, "*do* sit down and tell me every little incident that happened since I left you that mournful day."

Thus conjured, Mariette yielded, although, in fact, she considered she had done her duty in retailing small matters to Ella on the preceding evening.

Owing to the pressing invitations of Arthur and Mr. Grosvenor, the travelers were prevailed upon to remain at

least a week. The three female friends were hardly ever separated—and although it was Autumn, they had undoubtedly sunny times. They strayed through the carpeted woods, now beautiful with the brightness of decay, and gathering the scattered hazel-nuts, they brought them home as trophies of their industrious pursuits. The amusement, however, which afforded them the most decided pleasure, was riding on horseback. Nothing delighted them better, than to shoot through the neighboring valleys at a neck-or-nothing rate; and, in sooth, it was a goodly sight to witness their wild exploits. Arrayed in their long, well-fitting habits, the ample skirts of which gracefully undulated in the breeze, with their pretty little hats, ornamented with their glistening plumes, placed jauntily on their heads, they vaulted into their magnificent saddles, disdaining the proffered assistance of the admiring men. After accomplishing this feat, they would seize the reigns of their sprightly palfreys in their kid-gloved hands, and maliciously cast triumphant glances at the disconcerted masculines, who stood conveniently near, wishing to accompany them, but not daring so to propose. A few merry observations and laughter-exciting hints, would escape them prior to giving the whip to the impatient horses, that longed to hie off with their charming burdens over the uplands and glades. Mariette, more adventuresome than her classmates, generally kept the lead; Ella's ambition prompted her to outdo her friend, and staid Mary Kensella, perceiving how matters were going, thought it the most advisable thing in the world to outstrip the others, if she could.

Well flushed with exercise and victory were the three merry damsels, when they reset their feet in Grosvenor Hall.

Right joyous was the Austin household on the morning of Mariette's expected arrival. Servants were flying in every direction; treasured fineries saw the light, and the large old mansion wore an aspect of festive glee. The light-hearted parents surveyed the rejuvenated rooms with visible satisfaction—everything around the premises had assumed a holiday garb. Betty Carey was actually "transported out of her seven senses," as she herself averred; she was delighted beyond hope of expression at the idea of seeing her darling again. The domestics generally knew that the housekeeper was elated, for her orders were perfectly unintelligble.

When egregiously misunderstood, she would administer a severe rebuke; but if they appeared to feel repentant on the strength of it, "Ah! ye craythers!" she would exclaim, "shure its meself that never intindid to hurt the laste ov yer feelings. Put a stop to yer piping now, and contingue the work yez are at;" and this piece of condolence, it was conjectured, was all-powerful with the servant maids. While engaged in one of these amiable reparations, a carriage halted at the door; her prophetic heart surmised who was its occupant, and tearing off her immaculate apron, she bounded up stairs with the vigor of twenty in her limbs.

Mariette was in the embrace of her delighted parents—her little brothers and sisters were clinging fast to her dress; but no sooner was one tiny hold relaxed, than Betty filled the vacancy to welcome back her nurseling and her pet. A great change, the mother thought, these three years had wrought in her child. She had grown tall and beautiful; her gait, before so sweepingly graceful, had become gracefully majestic, and the bright light that twinkled in her mischievous blue eye, had sobered down into a steady, attractive beam.

Mr. and Mrs. Austin descanted glowingly that evening on the developed loveliness of their daughter, and with true parental instincts, they prayed to heaven to keep her from danger and sin. All the servants who had been in the family prior to her departure, greeted her return with undisguised rejoicings; and when Mariette, at her night-devotions, recalled the events of the day, she did not fail to thank her Maker for giving her such loving parents and such unforgetful friends.

CHAPTER XII.

PROGRESSION.

Art thou sorrowed and despondent,
Prone to view the darker side,
Of the ever-changing picture
Shown by this false world of pride?
Dost thou find thy nature shrinking
When thy seeming friends deride?
Then be patient—child, be patient,
Think of me—I am thy Guide.

"WELL, Ellie," said Mary Kensella, as both found themselves comfortably seated in the family-carriage of the Grosvenors, "we are actually on the journey at last."

"And much to my satisfaction," returned Ella, "for according to your descriptions, I am to find in Father Dominick, a person completely out of the common run."

"Now, now," laughed Mary, playfully, "I told you to look out for an ordinary and yet extraordinary personage. You know I don't care a button about outward appearances, if the mental apparatus, etc., are to my taste."

"Of course! who would be guilty of supposing Mary Kensella, the philosophical stoic, capable of noticing anybody's countenance, only inasmuch as it was an index of the mental apparatus, etc."

"Fair and easy, Ellie dear," remarked her companion, smiling. "But speaking seriously, I am very glad that you have an opportunity of knowing Father Dominick. When I am gone he will be a consoler, a comforter, a dispeller of all your doubts. Do not start thus, Ella; I am confident you guessed the truth before."

Tears gathered in Ella's eyes as looking steadfastly at Mary, she replied:

"When you are gone, Mary? Then has that sad suspicion really a foundation in truth? But if you leave me, all my recent wounds will bleed afresh. What care I for the butterfly acquaintances that throng our house whenever festivities are announced? Could I rely on any of their affections."

"Rivali," suggested Mary, shortly.

"They fawn now, and they flatter, but if adversity overtook us, do you think that their shadows would darken our door? No, Mary, I can not be deceived by this gaudy emptiness, and if I lose you, I lose my only friend."

"Pshaw!" ejaculated the imperturbable Mary.

"But Arthur? Have you not bestowed a thought on him? He is so blindly devoted, Mary; so loving and so true. And his prospects," she added proudly, "are such as no maiden in America would disdain."

"When I am gone," began Mary, unheeding the latter appeal, "you will frequently visit Father Dominick, Ella; you will tell him your griefs, your troubles and your joys, because you are naturally confiding, and must have a trusty friend. He is famous at giving advice; and if, under his guidance, you do not become a second St. Rose of Lima, why the fault will not rest with him."

"Mary," said Ella, taking her hand and regarding her earnestly, with an idea to read the thoughts of her soul.

"Well," was the concise reply, as she unflinchingly returned the glance. But Ella perceiving that she could neither penetrate her mind nor move her purpose, murmured, as she turned away her head:

"She will tell me nothing, but make me the butt of her dignified jests."

"You wrong me, Ella," quickly retorted Mary, a slight touch of acidity in her steady voice; "but," she added gently and affectionately, "I will forgive you to-day."

"Then since you are not pleased to be communicative, you may give me a sketch of Father Dominick's character. I am convinced it is the readiest way to settle our sisterly dispute."

"I am afraid you esteem the venerable gentleman too lightly, Ella; but I am well aware that you never take anything on another's recommendation. On these grounds I can not comply with your invitation, although if I did essay a description, I could never do justice to his simplicity, piety, and zeal—to his benevolence and wide-spread charity."

"You told me once, Mary, that your father and he were college-friends."

"I suppose I did; but let me tell you now, that Father Dominick made an appointment to be at our house by ten o'clock. A capital opportunity to introduce you without

beating a march to his residence, where, ten to one, you could not find the blessed man a moment alone."

The residence of Mr. Kensella was situated in a fashionable street of Philadelphia. It was a splendid stone-front building, which, on account of its hospitable owner, was much resorted to by the artists and literati of the city. When the friends alighted they were greeted by Mrs. Kensella, a woman decidedly plain-featured, but sweet-tempered and kind-hearted, if her face told not a tale.

"Has Father Dominick arrived yet, Mrs. Kensella?" demanded Ella, with an appearance of real anxiety.

"Not yet, my dear—but listen! the clock is striking ten! Poor Father Dominick, however, is not master of his moments."

The trio betook themselves to a convenient sitting-room, and engaged in a pleasant conversation, until, in the course of half an hour their expected guest stepped in.

Father Dominick was tall and rather stout, with a great, massive chest, and square shoulders, denoting muscular strength. His forehead was broad and high, expressive of intellectual power, and his bright, dark eyes were full of a natural goodness of heart. His leading characteristics, perceivable at a glance, were benevolence and a kind of pitying sympathy. He was delighted to form the acquaintance of Miss Grosvenor, and hoped that, from that instant, they would cease to be strangers. He was evidently heart and soul in the business of his heavenly Father. He spoke of prospective churches, pious associations, means of alleviating the sufferings of the poor during the coming season, and many other things connected more or less with his sacred calling. There was no lag in the conversation. If a pause occurred, Father Dominick was sure to remember some outlandish anecdote, so foreign from former subjects, that, independent of its intrinsic mirthfulness, it was well calculated to excite the "risibilities" of the company. Ella was vastly taken up with his zeal and the urbanity of his manners, and when he was about to take his departure, she did not fail to invite him to Grosvenor Hall. The proposal was graciously accepted, but he could not say when he would be able to put his promise into execution.

That evening Mr. Grosvenor and Arthur, accompanied Mr. Kensella to his home. They had quite a convivial time of it; and when, after tea, the juveniles of the family were

admitted, they were all kept in continual convulsions by the wit and precocious shrewdness of Thomas More Kensella, who was honorably named after England's illustrious Chancellor. He was a clever little fellow, always ready with an apropos answer; and notwithstanding that he several times "brought down the house," his own countenance remained as sober as a judge's. They were ordered to bed at the usual hour by their inexorable father; whereupon, with one assent, they petitioned an extra half hour. Vain, however, were their entreaties and expostulations; Tom's logic failed to convince his father that there was any necessity for the indulgence; so, making the best of the worst, they set about bidding their seniors a graceful and affectionate good night.

When the children had retired, the company divided into two parties. The elders drew themselves compactly before the blazing fire, and vigorously braced themselves up for a pleasant and profitable tete-a-tete, while the juniors made good their retreat to a window hard by. Drawing aside the heavy curtaining, Arthur, Mary and Ella, were instantly relieved by the white light of an autumnal moon.

"Arthur," said Mary, when they were seated to their satisfaction, "did you read the books that I deposited with Ella for your perusal?"

"I have explored the contents of three of them," he answered, "more, be it confessed, through complacency towards *you*, than through any desire to become acquainted with the fundamental truths of your religion. I am well satisfied with my own, Mary; my ancestors, among whom were many great and talented men, rested securely within its pale, and went to Heaven, doubtless, by practicing the doctrine it inculcates. I hope you do not intend to gain me to your side, that is the side of your Church, as you did my sister Ellie," he added with a dubious smile.

"Now, Ellie," cried Mary, "up and defend your friend! Did I allure you from the profession of your *ancient* faith?"

"Indeed you did not—it was entirely the work of God. Of course you often enlightened me when I voluntarily asked advice, but otherwise, I must thank the Blessed Virgin for this most salutary change."

"In fact," resumed Arthur, "since I read those chapters on Grace and Mortification, my mind is in a very unsettled state. If I feel tempted, for instance, to lounge about indefinitely, or to satisfy some indolent inclination, lo and

behold you! a voice as from within, whispers tinglingly in my ear, 'Grace demands mortification.' Now I leave it to yourself to answer if this is not exasperatingly annoying. I do not wish to encourage this feeling, Mary, therefore I think I shall return the remainder of the books unread."

"Why Arthur," returned Mary with feigned surprise, "who ever would imagine you so ungallant as this. You, so enlightened, so intelligent, so much above the mediocral world as you suppose yourself to be! I am astonished that you would refuse any lady the honor of reading what she presents you with, more especially one for whom you profess regard."

Now this was straightforward, but the Kensella's, from first to last, were a decidedly plain-spoken people. Arthur colored slightly while his maiden lecturer remained unperturbed, and Ella laughed mischievously at the unexpected scene.

"But," argued Arthur, after an interval of silence, "granting for an instant, an impossibility, i. e., that the Catholic Church is the only road to Heaven, and that I were so convinced, do you think I would be obliged to avow myself a member at the risk of breaking my father's heart?"

"Remember, Arthur, that the Almighty 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Engrave this maxim on your memory—courageously read the books that I will send you from time to time, and if theological difficulties puzzle you by the wayside, just come to me, and I will introduce you straightway to one who will elucidate them on the spot."

"You are an excellent provider, Mary, and I am sure you have an able assistant in Ella, who is only too willing to instruct. However, I promise you both to make a manful resistance.

During the latter part of the conversation, Ella had bent forward over the window-sill, and so completely was she absorbed in her reflections, that she was insensible to what had passed. She was gazing intently on one little star, the lovely attendant of the moon.

"As you will," returned Mary, in answer to his remark, "row against the stream until the current grows to strong. But look at this romantic young lady. Would it be charitable to entice her back from the realm of dreams?"

"The question is, could we succeed in doing it," said Arthur, "for between you and me, Mary, she spends the

largest portion of her time in dreams, insomuch, but it is a secret yet, that she does not mind the marked attentions of certain crusaders, who are besieging the Jerusalem of her heart."

"That lonely star reminds me of a lonely sleeper," murmured Ella, with a sigh. "My mother, pray for your wayward child!" and she clasped her white hands, and with streaming eyes looked up into the placid sky.

Melancholy was beginning to diffuse his mist, and it is impossible to say how the scene would have terminated, had not Mr. Grosvenor's timely intervention recalled them to the reality of taking leave.

"Papa," said Louis, running down the ravine to meet them the moment he heard the wheels, "Papa, I hardly expected you to-night."

"Why not, my son," demanded Mr. Grosvenor.

"Because you were absent *so* long, and I felt so lonesome and so sad." The father stooped down to kiss the forehead of his boy, and led him back to the mansion by the hand.

Far out in the night a faint glimmer was visible in an eastern window of Grosvenor Hall. It shone from Ella's chamber. She was still on her knees, but so wrapt up in her devotions, that her taper waxed dim, and flitted gustfully before she bethought herself of retiring to rest.

Quenching her solitary light, she prepared to disarray herself by the white beams that stole through the crimson curtains, when suddenly her ear caught the sound of a guitar accompanying voices or a voice. She started! could it be the melody of unseen angels, chanting the praises of the Lamb? or mayhap conducting a soul to the realms of peace and glory? These were her first impressions—she looked upon the sky, but nothing save the waning crescent presented itself to her gaze. She was beginning to reconcile herself to the idea that it was merely a fancy, when a voice again soared tremulously aloft. She listened: there was a romance in the incident that reminded her of legendary Spain, with its silver stars—the music of its waters—the moonlight serenades of its gallant Dons to their beautiful Signoras. Stepping into the shade to avoid detection, she heard the faltering words. They were wild and passionate, strong as an Alpine storm, and, together with the strain that accompanied them, evidently the singer's own production. The sufferings of a wounded heart were touchingly described, its

agony and hopeless grief. Each stanza concluded with a petition to a ravishing but heedless creature, imploring her with fiery earnestness to pour a balm upon the wounded heart. Then that powerful burst died away; a few soft chords were touched with exquisite delicacy, and the songster told in liquid numbers how the wounded heart might be healed.

Ella experienced what she never experienced before. She felt the rich flush mounting to her cheek, and imagined that it was through indignation, still she could not deny that pleasure lent its warmth to the glow. Her maiden feelings fluctuated strangely—she checked the unwonted emotions that were rebelliously rising within, and carried on the siege of Babylon with her palpitating heart. When all was silence without, she ventured to peep through the curtains: she was confident she could not be seen, and lo! reclining against the trunk of an aged oak-tree, and standing upon Autumn's tinted leaves, she beheld the stately Richard Rivali, his gaze riveted on the identical window through which she so curiously peered. "What audacity," she murmured, her red lips quivering and her cheeks of crimson hue. Probably she half thought so in her inmost soul; but as she said nothing further we are only at liberty to surmise.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

The Tempter came with illusion bright,
And evil veiled in a robe of light.

Leaving Ella Grosvenor to combat with her grief, to struggle with her hopes, and to war against the new sensation which was beginning to fill her mind, let us turn our attention for a while to the joyous Mariette Austin. The cup of pleasure was presented to her lips and she did not dash it away. She had too many friends in her western home, but her advisers were too few. Every body was willing to flatter her caprices, and only for the faithful correspondence she kept up with Sister Angelique and the warning

admonitions of Betty Carey, she might have plunged, with the recklessness of her nature, into a dangerous vortex. The good nun cautioned her of the dangers and perils that beset her path, strictly enjoining on her as a sacred duty, never to neglect her prayers, and never to let more than a month glide away without receiving Holy Communion. Ettie laughed when she read the friendly advices, and answered in a jocular style, but Sister Angelique continued her prophetic warnings, for she knew more of life with its breakers and hidden obstructions than the wild young mariner who was just unfurling her sails.

A series of concerts was announced to be given by a celebrated foreign troupe, during the week after Christmas. The fame of the performers was wide-spread, and their arrival was hailed in the city with rapturous applause. Among those who crowded to listen to their singing, was Mariette Austin. She was perfectly entranced—her eyes could scarcely be tempted from the orchestral figures, till about the third evening, when, during a temporary withdrawal of the company, she condescended to glance around. Directly fronting her sat a young man, who was viewing her long and earnestly before she became aware of the fact. Encountering her gaze, he instantly directed his attention elsewhere, but it was her turn to be astonished, for, to a form that would have been of faultless symmetry for its extreme attenuation, he added facial charms of no ordinary degree. The four succeeding nights he occupied the same position, and each time he grew handsomer in her esteem. Noticing the incident to Ella, she remarks, after severely condemning herself,—

"You know, my dear companion, I am rather susceptible in matters like these, but I am seriously getting to work to bring my truant heart into a decently tractable mood. Oh! how often, in the turbid calm that succeeds these wild intoxicating moments, do I regret the peaceful security of Notre Dame, where pleasures like these were strangers, but where joys more solid and lasting were our own. Yes! Ellie, in one of your own pathetic lines, I can only say, 'childhood's happy, peaceful days are over,' and alas! and alas! that they are!"

"I am faithful to my devotions, and good Betty Carey, the nurse of my infancy, the pedagogue of later years, will have me say my Rosary with her. She is constantly persisting

to introduce me to one Father Beechinor, whom she complacently styles a 'jewel of a man.' Do you often fall in with genuine Irish characters down in Philadelphia, Ella? Without any exaggeration, they are the pepper and salt of life. Betty informs me, with a face of emphatic meaning, that the ould counthry, St. Patrick's Isle, is a celestial Aden upon earth, and innocently wishes me to take a trip there in the ensuing spring."

On the last evening of the engagement, Mariette remarked that a shade of anxiety rested over the young man's brow. The outline of his face was womanish, of the classic Grecian mould. His eyes were dark and fiery, but great bluish semi-circles ran at their base, across his cheeks—a languid pallor overspread his countenance, reminding you involuntarily, of the inertness of the consumptive, and his coal-black hair, thick and curly, was thrown back in wavy clusters from his forehead, fair and high. His dress was of poor material and simple make, and not a single ornament was visible on his person.

"Ah," soliloquized Ettie, as she noticed his downcast features, "he is evidently the sport of fortune. I wonder can he be an artist? His active eye speaks much in behalf of his soul. How many specimens of humanity hav'nt I met since my return from Europe! They say I know nothing of life—but I do! I can easily read the heart, and construe motives pretty well betimes. The poor youth looks like as if he was dying. Maybe his mother is not alive, and perhaps he has no sisters," and in this plausible train her thoughts continued their course.

For a long while she lost sight of the pale-faced youth, and his image was beginning to fade from her memory, when an acquaintance was brought about in a very unexpected manner. Visiting one of her friends, she was surprised to find him by the piano, looking over some manuscript music. So intently preoccupied was he that he failed to notice her entrance until the young lady of the house introduced him as "Mr. Raphael Russell, who spent his days and nights in studying Beethoven, Handel, Haydn, and all the masters, ancient and modern." After an interchange of common civilities, they engaged in a desultory conversation on the weather, the state of the country, music, poetry, or any chance subject that presented itself to their minds. By and by Mr. Russell departed, but not before telling Mariette that

he would be most happy to continue an acquaintance so auspiciously begun.

"I fear me," said Miss Irma de Percherere, when he had retired, "that Raphael, poor youth! is hastening himself to the grave. He does far too much for the paltry remuneration he receives. And the wretched life he leads! O Mariette, it is really disheartening to think of the misery of the world. Only imagine a young man of the finest and rarest abilities, dragging out a weary existence, that ought to have been one of bliss, in a comfortless room of a deserted dwelling. Scarcely the barest necessaries furnish the scanty apartment, and just think of his desolation when the evening is closing in! There is no cessation of labor—the solitary lamp is produced, and the artist wastes his years in an unprofitable occupation, which hardly suffices to procure him food."

"You have drawn an appalling picture, Irma," answered Ettie, shuddering, "but is he destitute of family and friends?"

"He is as guiltless of companionship, as was Adam before the creation of Eve. I pity him, wasting the bloom of his youth in this joyless manner."

"Which does he do?" inquired Mariette, "compose music or give lessons?"

"He composes beautifully, but who ever gave a child of genius his merit during life? He must suffer the lot of his illustrious predecessors, the talented of all nations and times—he must pine and perish, and let futurity erect a monument to his name."

Mariette scanned the countenance of the speaker narrowly, to discover if, perchance, there was not a feeling stronger than compassion reigning in her heart. But her scrutiny was vain: the girl apparently commiserated the sufferer's lot, and that was all. After a pause she asked:

"Does he visit you often, and have you heard him play?"

"Indeed have I," was the satisfied rejoinder. "There is magic in the very sweep of his fingers. You must listen to him, Mariette; I am sure you will soon fall into my opinions concerning him. If you come here next Friday evening, I promise you a genuine treat. Give me your word that you will—I shall accept of no excuse, moreover, you will be more than pleased."

Mariette, after a faint resistance, complied with her friend's

desire. That evening she was rather thoughtful; her merry jokes and ringing laughter were not heard, and that night she dreamed of the sorrowful-looking Raphael Russell.

On the following morning her first thought was of him, but suddenly a dart of remorse shot across her conscience, and "O my God!" she exclaimed, "forgive me! I offer thee my heart! my all!"

"Betty," said she, after breakfast, introducing herself into that high functionary's department, "will you deign to be my escort to Father Beechinor's confessional?"

"Why, thin, the blessin' of God be upon you, darlint, sure tis'nt long since you wor there before."

Are you afraid I am getting too good, Nurse, or have you any objections to my devotional bent?

"Is it me, asthore machree, is it *me* that u'd have objections? No! no! alanna bawn, 'tis the glory o'me heart to see ye on the road to Paradise. I'll be ready, avourneen, while you'd be saying Jack Roberts," and divesting herself of the trappings of her vocations, she donned her bonnet and shawl.

"Really, my dear Betty," whispered Mariette on their return homeward, "I can not help conceding that Father Beechinor is a priest according to the heart of God. His advices are like balm to my spirits. I feel strong now, as it were, in the might of the Lord. Yes, Betty, I will be said by you at length, and probably next week I will go with you to see the amiable man."

But Betty's attention was wandering during the latter remark.

"There, acushla macree," she exclaimed, thrusting out her right arm to its full extent, and pointing with one taper finger to a snug brick house on the opposite side of the street, "that's where me friend Dinny O'Brady an his wife an childre lives. As shure as a gun that's herself looking out o' the windy! Good morrow, Biddy, asthore," she cried, in no subdued accents, while a smile of satisfaction lit up her honest face. Biddy returned the uncouth salutation by a good-natured nod of the head. But Betty's unladylike demonstration called forth a severe rebuke from Mariette, while she, good soul, endeavored to persuade her young mistress that there was nothing "rashional" in the act.

According to promise, Friday evening found Mariette at the residence of her friend. Two or three lady acquaintances

were present, but Russell had not arrived. They amused themselves gaily by talking of parties, fashions, operas, concerts, and a thousand little nothings, until in the midst of an animated debate, the expected stepped in upon their glee. He was slightly astonished to find so many in waiting, and would have withdrawn unceremoniously, had not Irma insisted on his staying and executing his last production, for the edification of all. With much trepidation, and a great deal of ungraceful confusion, he seated himself at the piano and performed—not his last production, but an entrancing impromptu. The listeners were enthusiastically delighted; it was as if a magic spell were thrown over Mariette's soul. Miss Irma smiled complacently during the progress of the composition, and when the artist had retired, "now, Mariette," she exclaimed, "did I give Raphael more than his merit—did I even tell you half?"

Mariette's only answer was a sweet and thoughtful smile.

From that moment it seemed as if a luxurious slumber crept over the inert faculties of Mariette Austin. She was blind to the perils of her situation, for that great, enervating sleep was upon her, so like the fabulous influence exerted by the basilisks of old. The struggles of conscience would, once in a while, dispel the palpable mist that enveloped her spirits, but, from the altar-fires of love, rose odorous counter-mists to replace those that had been driven away.

After their second meeting, chance, so to speak, threw Mariette and Russell a great deal together. By degrees their mutual constraint disappeared, and it became evident to the most observant beholders, that they sought one another's society. Raphael never played so well as when he imagined that Mariette was within hearing, and her eyes were never brighter than when they beamed upon him. She had permitted his image to take possession of her affections; and although she knew that he was poor to destitution, an alien to her faith, a victim branded by death, she loved him with a foolish love. Although she knew that the watchful Church regarded mixed marriages with a sorrowful eye, and that her wealthy parents would discard her and despise Russell, she loved him with a foolish love.

Gradually, very gradually, she gave up her practices of devotion. First, her morning prayers seemed so extravagantly long, that she could not resist the temptation of leaving off the Three Hail Mary's, with the ejaculation. "O

Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee," which in her fervor of "long ago," she had promised to the Queen of Heaven in honor of her immaculate life. Then in the evening, the Litanies took such a length of time to recite, that she dropped them one by one. Moreover, she was so fatigued after the frivolities of the day, that she fell into the immortified habit of leaning cozily on her bed during prayer; and more than once it happened that her distracted mind was unable to remember whether she had said the De Profundis and Salve Regina, or not. Soon, she concluded that she was not "good enough" to go to Confession every two weeks. Girls who made more pretensions to piety than herself, contented themselves with being monthly communicants, and their friends and relations were Catholics, while hers were not.

And all this time the passion was gathering strength. The blaze had been applied at the base of the pyre, and the red, smoky flame eat its way before it, consuming with its silent, murky avidity, the spasmodic resolutions that the misguided Mariette sometimes took. Ever and anon, the great, blinding smoke would clear away from her faculties, and she would look, with affrighted terror, on the havoc made on her soul. A vista of untold miseries would spread before her vision:—she was giving up her God, her parents, her hopes of the hereafter, for a human idol, which could only bring destruction to her peace. Then, with a stormy, convulsive effort, she would put an extinguisher on the flame that had grown volcanic by indulgence—but was it effectually quenched?

No!—for she did it in her own poor might, without seeking assistance from above; and she blindly neglected that wise admonition of the Scriptures, "He that loveth the danger shall perish therein."

Again she would visit Miss Irma de Percherere, hoping, yet fearing, to encounter Russell. "I will tell him," she would whisper to her conscience, thinking thus to lull it to repose, "that I will give him up for ever. Just this one interview, and adieu to him for aye." But this one interview only served to overturn her previous good resolutions. The wild, passionate glances of Raphael, and his vehement protestations of regard, were too much for her feeble resolves, and the impetuosity of her nature breaking through the barriers of grace, she would leave his fatal presence, more than ever a slave in the sight of pitying angels.

She had been advised by sincere well-wishers, to avoid the companionship of Irma, who was her own mistress, and who seemed, moreover, feverishly anxious to promote a union between Mr. Russell and Miss Austin. But Mariette turned a deaf ear to these warnings. She saw in Irma a *friend*—one who was willing to flatter her vanities, and humor her whims; who was always ready to speak to her of Raphael, to raise him in her estimation, to retail what he had said of *her*, and who acted as an impartial umpire whenever any difficulty occurred. She could not help considering it strange, that she should take such a lively interest in her marriage with the artist; but Irma assured her she was her truest friend, and simple Mariette Austin listened and believed.

Another main point that should have arrested her attention, was their different religious convictions. Irma, professing Universalism, would fain persuade Mariette that her religion was too crushing and exact; but finding that "her friend," although now deplorably tepid, defended the Ancient Faith with a vigor and impetuosity that she had not expected, and fearing the defeat of her cherished designs, she prudently, and with wily tact, endeavored to repair her mistakes. But not so was it with Raphael Russell. He was an avowed atheist, and Mariette having on two or three occasions attempted to prove to him the existence of God, noticed how his thin, feminine nostrils dilated with a swell of scorn, and his proud, quivering lips curled with an assumption of disdain. Not satisfied with this, he had passed taunting remarks on every creed, and in particular on her own. She arose with calm indignation, looked down on him with lofty contempt, and left him, as she supposed, never to be reconciled again. But Irma would visit her after she had a sufficient opportunity to cool down; would insinuate herself into her good graces by her soft and winsome ways, and generally succeed, before departure, in re-establishing the dominion of the atheist-artist in her heart.

Mariette had neither the art to conceal her feelings nor the inclination to do so. Her parents noticed her frequent fits of abstraction, and shrewdly suspected the cause; but they prudently forbore from giving expression to their thoughts. Nor were they in anywise displeased—for they innocently imagined the successful champion, to be a certain young man whom they looked upon with especial favor. Charles Salisbury, in truth, was regarded with affection by Mariette, but

with the affection that a sister feels for a brother with whom she grew. They had been intimate from childhood, and since her return from Europe, she was as frank and unreserved with him as she had been years before. Upon her playful, artless manner towards him, the youth founded many hopes, and in the blindness of love, he interpreted every kind expression as a covert declaration of requited esteem. He was a practical, sensible personage, wealthy in his parents' right, and on the high road to become more so, by his own industry and business tact.

One day Charles sought the presence of Mariette in a more than ordinary thoughtful mood. He was rather shy at the commencement, but gaining courage as he proceeded, he gave full utterance to the hot words of devotion that issued from his manly soul. He told, in fervid language, how he had always loved her, how her image was enshrined in his bosom, how her thoughts were his thoughts, and her desires his law; and he concluded his eloquent pleading, by offering her his heart, his hand, his possessions, his all. During the time he was speaking, the listener's countenance assumed an aspect of the most genuine surprise; so unexpected was the confession, that she was rendered actually speechless; her large, blue eyes, opened to their widest extent, while he, unaccountably misconstruing these warning evidences, warmly continued to press forward his suit. At length she found words to express her unqualified astonishment; she shortly explained how she had always considered him as an elder brother, and begged him very seriously to banish her memory from his mind. There was a merciless annihilation of all his hopes in her firm, decided tone.

This was a stern reality. Downcast and dejected, Charles no longer urged; but when Mariette's parents heard of the transaction they were grievously disappointed. Still, they did not interfere or reproach her, for they knew that the heart was not always a docile subject to the will.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PROPOSITION AND ITS EFFECTS.

Art thou wearied, art thou anguished,
Art thou deeply grieved to be
All forsaken, all abandoned,
Out alone upon the sea?
Are the waters wreathing fiercely
Up about thy bark and thee?
Then, in those fearful moments,
Child, remember Heaven and me.

LATE in the cold month of February, a party of dazzling brilliancy assembled at Mr. Austin's. Silver-mounted carriages lined the length of the square, and a gorgeous throng of ladies and gentlemen streamed into the hospitable house. Mariette was arrayed in a delicate pink satin, over which flowed gracefully a gauzy illusion of sunset hue, looped up here and there with moss-buds, pale roses, and tiny bunches of mignonnette. They may have been artificial, but it would take a long time from any observer to arrive at such a conclusion. A string of mammoth pearls encircled her swan-like neck, and natural flowerets were interspersed in the glossy folds of her rich, brown hair. There was something queenly in the sumptuous manner with which she assisted her parents to receive their numerous guests.

Among the invited was Raphael Russell. He glided in unnoticed and alone, and Irma, who was also there, the gaudiest of the gaudy, chatted away with her fashionable companions without seeming to recognize the shy, unornamented artist. His unpretending apparel was in strange contrast with the magnificence around. A plain, black suit, fitting loosely his attenuated limbs, was the best he could command in which to appear at a festivity, at which Mariette had requested him to attend. Bitter thoughts galled his tameless spirit, as he stood among the glittering assembly, unknown and unremarked. He began to look savagely at his innocent slighters, and wisely anticipating an unpardonable ebullition, he retired to a curtained window at the further extremity of the room. His black eye flashed fire, and his wan countenance became of an ashy hue, as the dark storm of passion swept rudely through his soul, but after it had

passed away, he shuddered at his own ungovernable vehemence, and peering through the embroidered curtain, he entered upon an audibly soliloquy. "She did not perceive my entrance," he muttered, while his wild eye ran over the apartments in search of her whom he sought. "There—there she is—smiling on everybody but *me!* Is she thinking of me? *Could* she love me? It would be cruel to tear her from this splendid abode. How magnificent she looks, and how happy!—but I know she misses me. Paugh! credulous fool that I am—perhaps if I went forth and mingled with the others, she would notice me no more than does my proud, base cousin Irma. But I wrong her—Mariette is not mean—she is generous, she is noble! She understands my dark moods, and can soothe my troubled heart. O I *must* win her! I must, or die in the attempt.

"If she were mine, this great yearning chasm in my interior would be filled up—and the idea of what Mariette calls *God* would not haunt me so terribly at times. There is *no* God, and Mariette *must* believe it—I can not bear to hear her talk of religion and such stuff. But I must go out or she will think I did'nt come."

Flinging back the jetty locks from his high, white forehead, and forcing a sickly smile to his thin sarcastic lip, Raphael stepped from his shelter as if he went forward to conquer. "I wonder will she be ashamed of me?" he asked himself, as he chanced to catch the reflection of his tall, and, comparatively, ill-clad person, in one of the immense mirrors that lined the walls. "I wonder will she be ashamed of me? If she will, I scorn her. But what a monster I am to wrong *her* by so foul a suspicion!"

Mariette was tripping about from one glad group to another, smiling and curtseying, and interchanging merry remarks, but there was a soreness in her heart, for she looked for Raphael in vain. At length she espied him standing solitary against a piano. A flush of joy mounted her cheek, and instantly flying in pursuit of Irma, they advanced together to greet him. His eye kindled lovingly as he saw her approach in her glee.

"Mr. Russell," said Mariette, pettishly, "how in the world did you manage to smuggle yourself in—unseen by me? You are very naughty, sir—but, pray, mix a little with the company. Come, until I make you acquainted with some of my relations and friends."

Mariette's principal reason for inviting Raphael to that grand entertainment, was to have an opportunity of introducing him to her parents. She could infer from the manner in which he would be received, whether they would willingly welcome him as their son-in-law or not. Accordingly, at a favorable moment, she presented him as Irma's particular friend, and watched, with keen attention, the impression he would make on their minds. The portly, and majestic Mr. Austin, regarded the fragile being before him with unaffected contempt; and the reception he met with from Mrs. Austin, was unsocial in the extreme. Mariette's heart fainted, but her cheek did not blanched; she was far too proud to betray herself while the cold, penetrating gaze of Miss de Percherere was fastened upon her face.

Raphael was stung to the quick—his eye blazed, and only that his rising anger was encountered by the freezing glance of Irma, he might have said something rash.

"You will favor us with a song, will you not Mr. Russell?" suggested Irma, in a soothing tone. "Draw to the piano—do—if it were only to divert *me* awhile. See! here is Norma—La Sonnambula—Ernani—Le Diable, and all the operas. Ah! now that the thought strikes me, suppose we essay a terzetto! Glorious! Let us take the terzetto from Norma."

Raphael felt like acting rebelliously; but after a moment's consideration, the cloud cleared off from his brow, and with a radiant expression on his palid countenance, "You are right," he whispered, "Mariette and you and I will sing the terzetto. Moreover, we will all do our best," he added, looking at Mariette with a reassuring smile.

They moved towards the piano. It was a superb instrument, with mother-of-pearl keys. Russell seated himself to play the accompaniment with the unconcern of a master of the art. A soft, original prelude attracted a few stragglers from the gay groups beyond, but when they were fairly engaged in the trio, the entire assembly gathered around them, hushed into an ecstatic delight. Mariette and Irma stood on either side of the performer, their beautiful dresses and coruscating jewelry placed in immediate contrast with Raphael's simple attire. But he was now in his glory. He knew that he could rise superior to the crowd which, a few minutes ago, considered him beneath their recognition; and the thought buoying him up, he sang as he never sang before. His enthu-

siasm was rapidly contagious—Mariette caught the spirit, and Irma, prompted by her secret ambition, endeavored to outdo herself. The scene was magnificently rendered. The spectators were unanimous in their unmeasured applause; and when the three, flushed with their bright success, turned to bow their thanks, fifty earnest voices requested Raphael to play. Without a shade of hesitation he reseated himself at the piano, and dashing at once into his subject, he executed a splendid extemporaneous military piece. You could almost hear the trampling of the impatient horses, the soldiers' march, the thundering of the cannons, the onset, the groans of the vanquished, the conquerors' shouts, and finally a soul-stirring melody, breathing of triumph and peace. The hearers were unmistakably affected. The dandified young men straightened up their girlish figures as the war-notes broke on their ears, and glanced superciliously around them, as if they had grown into sudden importance; their contracted chests appeared to assume a manly amplitude, as the fierce, fiery tempest of the battle rose before their view: and the glistening eyes of the ladies, especially of one, revealed how fully they sympathized with the victors of Russell's imagination. Others tested their feeble skill, but Raphael was the musical lion of the night.

In the course of the evening the merry meeting adjourned to partake of a sumptuous collation, and upon their return to the drawing-rooms, an orchestra awaited them, to discourse enchanting music for such as desired "to trip the light, fantastic toe."

In the midst of the revelry, Mariette Austin was miserable. Her father and mother regarded *him* with contemptuous indifference, and seemed to think that he found his way into their dwelling by some unaccountable mistake. Certainly, he could finger the piano, but perhaps he was one of a band of strolling minstrels. She read this in their expression, and it gave her as much as she could do to preserve an appearance of unconcerned mirth. "And Almighty God," she sometimes thought, "can not be less unfavorable towards him than my parents. But could'nt I convert him? Maybe I am destined by Providence to be the instrument of his salvation!" This was sophistry, in one to whom confession and the duties of her religion had become irksome; and had Mariette reflected, she would have remember the words of the Scripture—"He that loveth the danger shall perish therein."

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The short slumbers she snatched towards the morning were feverish and oppressed. She awoke with the impression of a horrid dream vividly stamped on her mind. She imagined she was out on the leaden waters of the stream of Time, and that a lowering sky, piled thick with jetty clouds, threw its sombrous shadow around. She thought she was a waif, sitting, horror-stricken, on a solitary plank. The waters were dismal, noiseless, but awfully deep and moat-like. No land was visible in the black distance; not a sound was to be heard; her silent loneliness was absolutely oppressive, until, amid the increasing gloom, she descried another farer making towards herself. Her heart beat high; she saw it was Raphael Russell; but when within hailing distance, the mysterious river divided; Raphael and his bark went down into the chasm, and with one hoarse moan the waves united, sullen and dark as before. Mariette screamed faintly, but awoke to find that, happily, it was only a phantom of the brain.

From this eventful period, Mariette became thoughtful, reserved, and less inclined to be sociable. The watchful Mr. Clarendon noticed the ominous change, but attributing it to a different source, he was of the fixed opinion, that his granddaughter's life was only a respectable improvement on the cloister. A sprinkle of variety, he concluded, was needed; so he proposed to accompany her to the lakes, the springs, or any of the eastern or southern cities. Mariette, smiling sweetly, assured him that her appetite for travel was satiated, and that, for the present, she was perfectly contented with the West. She also endeavored to induce him to believe that she was happy, but her voice faltered, and the old gentleman sadly shook his head. It was "a long time ago" since Mr. Clarendon had left behind him the halcyon season of youth, and he had probably forgotten the circumstance that young people fall in love. Thwarted in his first design, he arrived at the conclusion of letting her see some of the world. Accordingly he procured her invitations to balls, concerts, operas, theaters, and other attractive resorts; not that his judgment sanctioned such a proceeding, but he maintained that, in this instance, the end would justify the means. In the beginning, Mariette had her conscientious scruples; she feared such amusements by principle; but after a feeble resistance, she permitted herself to be led into a vortex of frivolous dissipations.

One bleak, wild day in April, Mariette was sitting alone in her chamber, holding an open letter in her hand. Her head rested passively against the mantle-piece. and by her eye, now fixed and expressionless, again fiery and bright, it was easily perceived that she was under the influence of some exciting emotions. "Alas! alas!" she exclaimed, as her bloodless lip acquired a crimson tinge, "why did I go to that wretched soirée last night? Oh! the shame of that ignominious proposal! What! does he think I am the slave of his caprices? To fly with him! To leave my parents, my kindred, my home, *by stealth!* Agony, remorse! St. Michael, shield me!" And the poor, cowering girl buried her face in her hands. She wept convulsively, and raising her streaming eyes to Heaven, she petitioned for mercy and pardon. "Adieu to the golden visions that gilded my peaceful youth. O happy school-days! O faithful friends! Is this the way, Sister Angelique, that I keep my promises to you? And you foresaw all this, and you warned me; but I would not be warned. It is well, it is well *you* do not know the depths into which I have fallen. But why do I run after pleasures? Does it restore joy to my bosom?—does it succeed in drowning my remorse? Answer," she continued, bitterly, "last night's soirée. My heart, foolish, reckless heart, longed for the moment in which he would avow his passion; but when he did it *last night*, when he asked me to flee with him—why did'nt I die with shame?"

She ceased—her gaze became vacant, until she suddenly remembered that the letter was still unread. Starting, she instantly sought the signature, when her eye encountered the name of Raphael Russell, simultaneously with which her cheek became of scarlet hue. "How shall I take this? Read it? No!" and she flung it indignantly on a marble stand by her side. But by some strange fatality, her gaze was riveted on the discarded document; and finally yielding to an impulse, she stretched forth her hand, and with brightening eye, she devoured the impassioned contents. It was written in a wild, irregular style—was frantic when he remembered he had offended her—humble and gentle when he sued for pardon, and vehement in his protestations of undying love. It struck the most dangerous chord in her nature. The spirit of Raphael was infused into his epistle; she imbibed it, and forgetful alike of past resolutions, prophetic forebodings, religion and home, she was about yielding

herself to a delicious reverie, when a slight tap at the door arrested the dreamy project, and scarcely had she time to secrete the poisonous letter, ere Irma de Percherere radiantly entered the room. The warning voice that whispered, "Distrust that smooth acquaintance," was silenced in her present delirium, and warmly, with sisterly affection, she welcomed "Raphael's friend."

"Ah, my dear Ettie," said Irma, drawing close to the fire, "it is dismally cold outside; the wind is like ice-pointed arrows. Did you enjoy yourself well last night?"

"A queer inquiry from an observer like yourself," was the laughing rejoinder. "Did you not notice how I played, danced, sang, and made merry generally?"

"Truly did I, my pet. Raphael was also there; but towards the conclusion of the entertainment, I remarked that he appeared to be greatly agitated."

Mariette did not like the tone in which this was delivered. It was so insinuating, so confidential—so much at variance with her own straight-forward ways.

"And what was the cause?" she inquired, regarding her visitor with an uneasy glance.

"*You* ought to know more about that than *I*, Mariette; but tell me, why are you so reserved when you imagine people are not in your secret?"

"Reserved!" exclaimed Ettie, in the utmost astonishment. "Do *you* say I am reserved, you who are deeper in my confidence than my very mother; and I acknowledge it to my shame. Do you say I am reserved?"

"There! you are the very image of an indignant Parisienne! a pretty Parisienne! Settle down into a sober American humor, and tell me, did Raphael say anything to displease you last night?"

Mariette's anger was beginning to bubble. Irma was very impertinent; but Irma's caressing hand was stroking Mariette's tresses, and the naughty ebullition ceased. She wavered, however, before reciting her adventures; but her oily companion, by artful suggestions, assisting interrogatories, and other means in her power, drew from her unwilling lips a truthful account of the affair.

"You will not consent to an elopement?" she demanded, after a pause.

"Could you ask me?" said Mariette, earnestly. "No! I have not so far forgotten my God, my parents, my con-

science. I would do much—anything for Raphael but that. No! No!" and she shook her head with an air of determined resistance.

Irma smiled patronizingly, as if she pitied the one who could cherish such absurd ideas, and drawing her chair over to Mariette, she prepared to show how untenable were her objections to the plan.

"Taking everything into consideration, my dear Ettie," she began, "what is there so terrible in an elopement? The disgrace is merely imaginary; and as for the displeasure of your people, time will soften it, if it does not convert it into love. Be not surprised at my argument. I have known instances in which these marriages proved more happy than those celebrated with festivity and pomp. If you have not read Shakspeare, you might have come across the quotation: "The course of true love *never* did run smooth," and, Mariette, this is one of the twists in the stream. Now, suppose that things went on in the ordinary manner—parents smiled, and friends approved—would there be any romance in the transaction?"

"Transaction!" echoed Mariette.

"Would there be any romance, I ask? Pshaw! you have read books enough to understand that opposition is affection's test."

The "friend" perceived that her random seeds were taking root in the impressible mind of the self-blinded Mariette. Following up her advantage, she continued:

"The ephemeral attachment of a summer's day is no attachment; it is only that which can live through the winter, and cleave to its object through storms and darkness, that can appropriately be termed love."

"Would you have me believe it is no crying sin to leave my home, and trust my fate to a—stranger?" asked Mariette, with the deepest concern, as if she were willing to be persuaded and yet was held back by some invisible force.

Irma comprehended the delicacy of her task when she responded: "To go no further, do the canons of your Church require parental approval? Would'nt it be beautiful if the priest stopped every matrimonial aspirant, to inquire if her father and mother were willing she should change her name? Preposterous, Mariette! Jacob absconded from the house of Laban, bearing his daughters away; no objections, if you please, the fact is undeniable. Your parents have no

valid reasons to oppose against a union with Raphael. He is handsome; you said so. He is talented and accomplished; but one grand disqualification exists—and that is, he is poor."

"And he has no religion," added Mariette, with a sigh.

"Could you bear to cast a glance away into the misty future? I will sketch an outline of what your life would be. You live in a little cabin near a forest of the West. The green, young vines shoot up alongside your dwelling-place; the dense and emerald trees ward off descending rays; wild flowers spring up in the winding pathways, and within your diminutive mansion, peace and plenty reign. You sit, cheerful and contented, at your cottage door, watching the meanderings of a stream; Raphael Russell is with you; hand-in-hand you breast the storm together; your sunlight is his love."

Mariette harkened to the honied words of Irma, with a kind of enchanted stupefaction. At any other time she could easily baffle her fallacious arguments; but now she listened, only too willing, alas! to be convinced. The cottage scene fired her fancy immediately; vague, poetical visions of love in nature's bowers, floated confusedly through her mind; and when Irma had finished speaking, she continued gazing as if an invisible panorama were pictured before her view. Perceiving that her mission was successful, the "reasoner" glided up to Mariette, and bidding her a soft adieu, she left her to her pleasurable thoughts. The murmurs of the "small still voice" were remorsely stifled, and with her head resting on her hand, Mariette looked abstractedly into the fire, till a servant appeared with a letter that had just arrived.

She received it rather impatiently; but when her eye fell on the foreign postmarks, her cheeks became of an ashy dye.

"Sister Angelique," she muttered, thickly, "the—the guardian, evil genius of my life. Why should she write to me now, *now*," and she nervously seized the epistle.

It may not be amiss to mention, that since her introduction to Raphael, her communications with the good religious, had become more and more unfrequent, until latterly she had dropped off the correspondence altogether. She did not breathe his name to the nun, or reveal the state of her feelings, for the time was past when Mariette wished to be reprimanded or to have obstacles thrown in her way.

Long and earnestly she regarded the seal before attempting to break it; but, at length, with something of desperation, she tore it asunder and read. Her countenance, alternated from an ashy pallor to a glowing red; and scarcely had she begun the second page than, uttering a piercing shriek, she fell on the floor in a swoon. Her parents, followed by Betty Carey and a file of servants, burst into her apartment, frightened and shocked to find her, as it were, in the very embrace of death. Mrs. Austin's presence of mind forsook her entirely; she wept hysterically over her unconscious daughter, while her husband, less agitated, went over to the lavatory and plentifully dashed water in her face. Finding this method ineffective, he called to the nearest domestic, whom he dispatched for the most experienced physician to be found.

"Arrah, Betty aroon," said the selected envoy, seizing Mrs. Carey by the elbow, and pulling her outside the door, "where, in the name of wondhers, will I find the most imminent phusishion in town?"

"In his office, to be sure, ye amadhawn," replied Betty, with an expression of superlative contempt; "hie off, out o' this wid ye, and don't be long nor lazy nither."

"Well, now, that same bates cock-fighting," put in the goodly servitor; "yes are, all o' yes, sindin me on a fool's errant, an meself a sthranger in the place; as I hope for mercy, Betty agra, I know no more about the docther an his house than the unborn babe."

"O, Holy Virgin, de ye hear the vagabon, an me darlint on the pint o' death? Will you run, you natural," she continued, stamping her foot authoritively; "will you run this blessed minit an fetch Docthur De Ranger right up?"

"The Ranger! There's danger!" rhymed the knight of the halter—Jerry was the groom—as seizing his caubeen, he vamosed in pursuit of his man.

When Betty Carey re-entered, Mr. and Mrs. Austin were in the act of placing the inanimate form of Mariette on a sofa hard by. She immediately darted over and covering the livid countenance with kisses, she burst forth into a wailing monologue, mainly indistinct, but anon, such ejaculations as the following greeted the listeners' ears: "O, Mother of Jesus, have pity on her; you know she is'nt ready to go; St. Joseph, pray for her; St. Michael, the strong angil,

hould back from her the arm of death; St. Patrick, the great and glorious Apostle, intercede for this child o' yer faith."

When the mother and Betty had arranged her gently, and smoothed the tangled hair that had fallen over her shoulders and face, the father perceived, for the first time, the letter she clutched in her hand.

"This must afford a clue," he whispered, as he stooped to disengage it; but the white fingers were locked about it, with a tenacity that resisted force. "Great God," he exclaimed, "is it possible she can be dead! Mariette, my child, my joy, awake!—awake and speak to your father. What cursed hand has written this which brings your young head to pillow on the breast of death?" and again he essayed to obtain possession of the missive; and this time he succeeded.

Standing, he hastily glanced over its contents; but no sooner had he finished, than an alarming ghastliness overspread his features, and looking hurriedly from his daughter to his wife, he rushed from the room. Mrs. Austin and Betty were left alone to keep watch with the unconscious girl.

In a short time the doctor arrived, breathless from the haste in which he had followed the Irishman.

"Arrah, Betty asthore," said the successful champion to the housekeeper, "shure its meself that nabbed him, an he jest preparin for a mornin's walk. Howsomever," he added, with a knowing wink and an inclination of his head to the left, "he had enough of that same, I'll warrant, afther me majesty's heels."

"Silence, you scoundrel," returned Betty, her patience completely exhausted; "silence, an clear out o' this."

"Her condition is precarious," said the man of medicine, dubiously—"a raging fever will ensue. It is a delicate case, but her constitution is vigorous," and he busied himself in applying restoratives, and prescribing alleviating draughts. He departed, promising to return in an hour; and Mrs. Austin, confiding the reviving Mariette to Betty, withdrew to seek out her husband in order to communicate the ill-fated news.

"Let her go," he answered, in a tone of bitter anguish; "let her go, perhaps she could not leave us in a better time."

"Why now," returned Mrs. Austin, in astonishment; "is this the sympthy I am to expect from him who is nearest to her in life? Is this a fit condolence to soothe a mother's pangs?"

"Read, and ask me then," and he handed her the letter. "She has played us false. There you will learn why she rejected Charles Salisbury, and why she has been so melancholy of late."

Mrs. Austin hastened to become acquainted with the contents of the manuscript. It spoke in a prophetic tone; and the idea that paralyzed Mariette was—"how did Sister Angelique learn these fatal facts? I did not reveal them—there is nobody here that would do so—how, then, does she know that Raphael exists, and that Mariette Austin loves him? Did her angel tell her so?" But when she came to the black picture of the hereafter, drawn in vivid contrast with the fervent days of her school-time, and the innocent joys of her youth, a complicacy of emotions overpowered her, and unconsciousness put a stop to further harrowing thoughts. But Mrs. Austin read further. The Sister depicted, with fiery pen, the horrors of an alliance with an atheist; how her parents would grieve, and how the Church would bewail the downfall of a rescued child. Life is but a dream of yesterday, and eternity lasts for aye. She concluded by a touching petition, in which she besought the Father of Mercies to avert the threatened danger—to remove her from the precipice over which she was blindly leaning, and to give her the grace and prudence to avoid those evil companions who, under the guise of friendship, poison the waters of life, and turn the streams of innocence into torrents of red, flowing vice.

The mother drank in every syllable of the warning sheet, and then, with a frightful placidness, she folded it neatly ere she laid it away. "Laurence," she whispered hoarsely, and with emotion, "forgive her—we may never see her in health again."

"Who can he be, of whom that Sister speaks, and of whose existence her parents are ignorant? Who can he be, I ask?" demanded, Mr. Austin, vehemently, unmidful of his wife's appeal. He paused a moment, and striking his forehead violently, "I have it now," he exclaimed; "do you remember, the youth that created such a sensation at the last party we gave out? It must be: a hired performer in a theatre, perhaps. O willful, willful child!"

For twenty-one days was Mariette the sport of a burning fever. It were painful to listen to her delirious ravings; but during that weary time, there was one that watched her uneasy slumbers, and in her uncouth and homely language tried to soothe her wild unrest. Betty Carey never closed an eye during the period of her foster-daughter's illness. "As soon as the dawn o' raison comes back at all at all," she was wont to console herself by saying, "I will march over to the priest's and bring the holy man to aise her burdened sowl. Oh! core o' me heart, machree acushla, 'tis little I thought when I nursed you, an infant on my knee, that ever you'd be brought as low as this. Oh! wirra, wirra, you that wor the flower of the city, to be lying helpless and insinsible, wid the roses gone from yer cheeks, an the yallaw colur of sickness livin in their stead. Alanna bawn mavourneen, why doesn't you opin yer eyes an look upon yer faithful nurse? Shure its meself that is spakin to ye. Be merciful to her, sweet Jesus! O Holy Virgin, let her stay wid us a little longer yet;" and thus, accompanying each ejaculation with appropriate genuflections, she passed the greater portion of the time. Her rosary was her inseparable companion, and her prayer-book, at the section of prayers for the sick, was worn from continued thumbing. Mr. Austin would frequently beseech her to retire, but, with a quiet pertinacity, she persisted in her refusal. "Arrah, Mr. Austin, how quare you are! Is it after sindin me away ye'd be, an the craythure scraming out every instant for help. Go along wid ye now, and indeed an in double deed, but you're the funniest man in naythure."

The father, mother, and grand-parent, would sometimes spend hours in silent agony over Mariette's couch. The anger of the former melted when he beheld the wreck of his daughter, and Mrs. Austin's pale cheek and worn expression sufficiently attested her anguish and her patient care. Mr. Clarendon's grief was stormy when he saw his blooming Ettie reduced to a living skeleton; the rich carmine of her cheek, supplanted by a hectic flush, and the coral of her lips, by an unnatural crimson glow. A wild fire burned in her great blue eyes, and her incoherent ravings and gnawing remorse, struck terror into their pitying hearts.

"She is on the eve of her crisis," said the doctor to her anxious parents; "if she survives till morning all danger will be past."

"Doctor, I implore you to remain till the fearful moment," pleaded the mother, earnestly. But he could not; he had other urgent cases, and his presence would neither retard or hasten the event; moreover, Mrs. Carey was experienced, and he trustingly left his prescriptions and sedatives with her.

Mr. and Mrs. Austin, Mr. Clarendon, and Betty Carey, formed the group that watched by the sufferer's bedside. Hardly were their breathings heard in the spacious chamber; the ceiling-lamps shed a mellowed, misty light, and the fire burned with an inconstant flame. Towards midnight a feeble moan broke from Mariette; she turned uneasily, languidly opened her eyes, shut them slowly; raised them again, and soon recognized the now delighted band. She faintly called her mother, who fondly kissed her waxen brow, while the others could scarcely retain their unbounded joy. Mariette was about to speak, but Mrs. Austin prudently forbade her, and gently solicited her to take a little repose. She endeavored to comply, but the newness of her situation puzzled her, and suddenly looking up, she asked if it was morning yet.

"No, dearest," replied her mother, in a low and soothing voice; "compose yourself to sleep; you will be greatly refreshed by the dawn."

Mariette was not satisfied, and seemed desirous to enter into conversation; but, weakness and weariness overcoming her, she sank into a peaceful slumber, and her subdued but measured breathings gave promises of returning health.

True to her word, Betty Carey hied off in the morning towards Father Beechinor's house. The priest was reciting his office, and without the least ceremony in the world, she begged him to accompany her straightway to Mariette Austin. The Father inquired into the particulars, and when possessed of the facts, he sent her sorrowing on her way, bidding her not return on such a foolish errand without the young lady's express consent. This was a thunderbolt to honest, good-intentioned Betty; Mariette, during her illness, was unceasingly demanding a priest; "but howsomever," she solaced herself by repeating, "shure his riverence knows what's for the best."

Under the skillful treatment of Doctor De Ranger, Mariette became rapidly convalescent. Soothed by the loving attentions of her parents and numerous friends, the occurrences that occasioned this sickness, were as total strangers to her

memory; but when she became stronger, the ideas, one by one, crowded back into her mind, and a vivid blush of shame mantled her emaciated face. She sought in vain for Sister Angelique's letter, but supposing that in her unconsciousness she had let it drop in the fire, she felt grateful that it had not fallen into curious hands, and began to ponder on the misery it foreshadowed. "Yes," she murmured mentally, "I will sever myself from my former evil companions—not that they are evil in themselves, only I know that their example does me no good. I will sever myself from them, and with them I will number Irma, and—and—and Raphael Russell." There was a long pause and great internal difficulty before the irresolute girl could bring herself to place Raphael among the proscribed.

Toward the middle of May, she was hearty and agile, and at the earnest request of some distant relations in the country, she prepared herself to spend a portion of her time with them. In the society of guileless maidens, whose youth grew amid cornfields, orchards and forests, Mariette, in a great measure, recovered her former glee. She arose at the first faint peep of the morning, and, after a hasty toilet, descended gracefully to accompany the milkmaids, and to inhale the balmy odor of the breeze, and the fresh scented breath of the kine. The pure, bracing air whistling by her in savory gusts, her spirits would dilate, and stooping to brush the dew from the opening leaves of the flowers, "How wonderful, O God," she would murmur, "are all thy magnificent works." Amid these innocent pleasures, serenity returned to her mind, and oblivion was stealing silently over the past. The girls of the neighboring farms were fair athletic creatures, with finely-developed forms, ruddy complexions, and cheerful hearts. They led the delighted stranger through their luxuriant valleys; they ascended the horned hillocks like gazelles, and when Mariette, unused to such muscular exercise, wearily lagged behind, and pantingly gasped for breath, their wild, merry laughter would ring out in exultant peals. They taught her how to manage the most ungovernable steed, and several times she led the van in their most hotly contested chases. In a week she was familiar with every glen and hollow, within a circumference of ten miles; every gurgling brook, every limpid stream, and each translucent fountain were dear instructive friends.

When the rustic maids were engaged in their daily labor,

Mariette, accompanied by an immense Newfoundlander, a particular favorite, would stroll through the lawns and meadows, over to the glebe with its model residence. "If this were only a Catholic chapel," she would sigh, "and these heathen statues representations of angels and saints, I would have attained the climax of my happiness.

"Dido! to the grotto! to the grotto!" shouted Mariette one beautiful morning, tying her gipsy hat carelessly under her chin. "Take my Evangeline, Dido, and we'll see who will arrive first at the trysting," and the fine animal no sooner received the deposit in its mouth, than both cantered off at a magnificent rate, until they reached the designated spot. Mariette gained the victory. Dido, the dear creature, knew that she wanted to be leader, so, with the generosity of a genuine Newfoundlander, she lagged becomingly behind, till within a few paces of the grotto, when, with a graceful bound, she crouched herself at the panting Mariette's feet.

Down through the azure air swept the golden mists of the sun-god; a brisk, occidental wind played through the shooting trees, and dallied with the delicate flowers that enameled the glorious plain. The grotto was a natural excavation in a jagged rock. It was a wild looking phenomena, neither deep nor high. Sharp ledges of granite frowned down from the ceiling, and the sides were thickly studded with pointed masses of stone. All was verdure around it, and the tendrils of an ambitious vine, began an energetic ascent up the rude edges of the entrance. "Yield me my book, good Dido," she whispered, gently patting the animal's head. Dido relinquished her hold, and in a moment more, Mariette was absorbed in the beautiful description of the Arcadian village of Grand Pré.

"Hark," she suddenly cried after an hour's peaceful reading, "can that be the music of a flute? and that tune! Heavens! I hope I am dreaming!" A rush of olden memories threatened to inundate her heart: she prudently but vigorously thrust back the unwelcome invaders, and resumed her poem in a hopelessly abstracted mood.

"Mariette, Mariette," exclaimed a dozen buxom lassies, flying to meet her on her return, "we will have tremendous doings this evening. Dancing till midnight—buckwheat and johnny cakes for supper, and for our collation, all the luxuries that can be had."

"Refreshing intelligence, surely," smiled Mariette with

evident delight, "but why, may I ask you, are all these festive preparations?"

"In honor of your amiable self, and to give you an insight into the enjoyments of country life."

Towards twilight the spacious parlor was cleared of all incumbrances; and an abundance of rural delicacies was served up in the reception-rooms on the other side of the hall. No formal invitations were extended—free admittance to all—that generous banquet was open alike to the beggar and the king. Among the strangers that honored the assembly by their presence, was one who attracted universal attention, aye, and admiration too. He was a tall, slight figure, arrayed in the costume of a highland Scotchman, with a bonny white cockade streaming from his highland cap. Others were dressed as Turks, Greeks, Italians and peasants of different nations, according to inclination or the resources at their command. The pseudo Scotchman did not partake of refreshment; he remained alone in the dancing department while the guests were tempting their appetites, and when they hilariously flocked back, with a nervous anxiety, he scrutinized each passing face.

The musical celebrites struck up a spirited hornpipe. Every swain made a valiant rush for the nymph of his selection, and right merrily flew the hours away, till the sun ran his banner up the east. Mariette did not join with the first set; neither did the highlander. She was completely taken with the novelty of the scene; the enjoyment was so hearty, and so healthy, so diametrically opposed to the sickly sentimentality and straining after effect almost necessary to a city ball.

"May I be so bold as to ask Miss Austin to be my partner for the next engagement?" inquired he of the tartan plaid, addressing the preoccupied Mariette. She started as if an electric shock had suddenly passed through her system—regarded him intently for a moment, and attempted an alarming scream, in which she most signally failed.

"Raphael!" she gasped—"you! you here—oh! oh! and for what?"

"If you love me," he said in a deep, impassioned voice, and with one of those fiery glances that inevitably thrilled her soul, "if you love me, I say, do not betray your emotions."

Those who were not dancing were too busy with their own

concerns to remark this little episode. Raphael gradually drew Mariette away, and finally they stood unnoticed, beyond the hearing of the most acute.

"Mariette," he murmured, his pale countenance lighted up with intensest pleasure, "when I heard through Irma, that you were leaving the city, I thought my heart would break. Oh! may *you* ever be spared such torturing feelings. To live without gazing on you, though it were only at a distance—the idea was death! Were I to perish I must follow. I saw you smile—I was happy—I saw your cheek regain its bloom, and I was glad. It was my flute you heard in the woods behind the cavern this morning. It was my shadow that yesterday evening darkened your path."

When Raphael Russell spoke, he threw his remnant of a soul into his eyes and language. Mariette unfortunately wavered. Why was it, that just as she was regaining happiness and forgetting him, he should return to cloud her peaceful dreams?

Mr. Russell," it was long since she had accosted him so formally, and her accents were tremulous now, "at my desire, let 'by-gones be by-gones.' We can never be more than friends—no! not even friends—henceforward we never meet again."

It was as if a thunderbolt smote the astounded Raphael—his proud white lip quivered, his hazel eye flashed. "What!" he exclaimed, shaking like an aspen in a north wind, "a rival, eh? And do *you*, in whom my foolish heart is buried, discard me for the miser's gold, the smiles of the lisping dandy, for the poisoned cup of wealth? Mariette Austin, I prized you above your value—I could not believe you were so utterly degraded as this."

The words were spoken rapidly, wildly and almost unintelligibly. A frown instantly contracted the brow of the addressed. Proudly she flung back her head, and with the air and dignity of a queen, she turned her glance from the excited youth. In a second he perceived his error. "What have I done? O heaven! Am I bereft of reason? Mariette, what did I say? Did I offend you? Alas! alas! I am mad! forgive me Mariette, forgive me," and he caught hold of her arm, and continued his entreaties for pardon till her momentary anger was calmed.

The sequel is that the basilisk fascinated his victim, and ere they parted that night they pledged their troth anew.

Before the close of June, she bade adieu to her country-companions, perfectly restored in bodily health, and with something of the old spirit of light-heartedness, and merry vivacity, recaptured from the wreck of her mirth.

Charles Salisbury beholding this change, was encouraged to urge his solicitations again. He was certain of the approbation of her parents,—but she was colder, more decided than at first, and absolutely interdicted him from speaking to her on that subject any more. Whether by chance or appointment, she was often joined in her lonely walks by Raphael Russell. In the course of time, her father perceived that she was falling back into her former abstraction, and, tracing the cause to its true source, he determined to give her a salutary check. Summoning her one day into the library, he awed her by the somberness of his expression, and the rigor depicted on his face.

"Mariette," he said, producing a letter from his writing-desk, "I presume this epistle is for you."

With trembling hand she received the long-missed document;—a flush of shame suffused her countenance, but, smothering her emotions, she asked in a faltering voice, if he was acquainted with its contents.

"I am," was the brief reply.

Mariette hung her head like a guilty child.

"Have the contents of that letter any foundation in fact?" he demanded, without unknitting his brows.

"Yes, father," answered Mariette, hardly able to articulate the words; but seeing the cloud grow darker, she dropped on her knees, and burying her face in her hands wept copiously, earnestly imploring forgiveness, during the interval that she could speak.

"Arise," said her father, sternly, "you need not kneel to me—do not ask pardon of me—for know that the instant you give your hand to that nameless, penniless youth, I cease to regard you as my daughter. I will not curse you—let that rest with God; but you will have broken the hearts of your mother and myself."

"Father, father," shrieked Mariette, "in the name of our Merciful Creator, do not denounce me in that terrible tone. Oh! do not drive me mad! You will destroy my reason."

"Will you give up, then, this foolish, this criminal idea?"

"Father!" was her sole reply, as her pallid countenance dropped.

"That is equivalent to no. Well, listen. From the moment you think proper to link your fate with Russell's, *never* address me again. Forget me as if I had never been—forget the mother that bore you—forget your doting grandfather, and go—bury yourself in misery and shame. I have spoken—the sentence shall not be annulled."

"Father!" she said wildly, seeking to evade his scrutiny, "have mercy on me for once. I will try to banish him from my memory; I will endeavor to avoid him. Yes! if my heart is shivered into atoms, I will fly from his baneful sight."

The father's expression softened. With clasped hands and streaming eyes, the wretched girl cowered before him, and raising her up gently, he bade her retire and remember the promise she had made.

"It is one of the hallucinations of youth," he said complacently, after the penitent's departure; "in a fortnight she will forget that poor, half dead-and-alive individual, and turn her attention to some of the brilliant young men, who justly account themselves honored when she deigns them a smile."

But was this anticipated vision realized? Alas! for the stability of a girl's resolution when headlong love is in the way! To give Mariette her merit, she shunned the haunts of Raphael; but, like an evil phantom, he followed her footsteps, breathing his tale of sylvan happiness into her ear, until, at length, she imagined it impossible to live outside that forest elysium.

Was Mariette Austin deserving of censure? Yes! for well she knew that her petted passions were hurrying her on to misery in this life, and, perhaps, to perdition in the next. Frequently she neglected her devotions, and when she attempted to pray, images of Russell and rural festivities rose in distracting hosts before her. She even went so far as to miss mass on Sunday's and holidays of obligation, under one or another futile pretext, without, however, making it an absolute practice. Moreover, it was observed that she paid unusual attention to her toilet, spending hours sometimes in arranging the folds of her dress, or disposing the waves of her hair.

One gloomy morning in July, while the pearly dew still rested on the petals of the flowers, and a few of night's dusky cloudlets lingered in the western sky, the Austin household

was thrown into a terrible commotion. The inmates rushed frantically from one apartment to another, consternation depicted on every countenance—terror gleaming from every eye. The exciting cause of this tumult was soon discoverable. Mariette was nowhere to be found!

CHAPTER XV.

CRISIS.

"TRULY, it is an eve of beauty," soliloquized Ella Grosvenor, as, on the vigil of the Assumption, a year and a half after her return from Namur, she sat in an ivied arbor that commanded a magnificent view of the Delaware. Her open herbarium lay on a stand before her, and wild roses, lilies, and violets, recently gathered, were scattered in a glittering heap on the table, and on the ground. "Truly, it is an eve of beauty," she dreamily repeated; "listen to the vesper-songs of the retiring warblers, and look at the river, like a mass of molten silver, shining in the declining sun. How stealthily it glides along! Not a ripple crisps its surface, and the dark shadows of the bordering trees only soften its glistening sheen. But what a splendid sky! O, home of my childhood, where is scenery like to thine! Behold those clouds, downy as the wings of an angel, fluttering in halo wreaths around the center of light. Soft are the winds of evening, perfumed by the breath of the flowers, diamond-like are the dews that sleep on the breast of the rose. Fair land of liberty, may you always be as beautiful, may you ever be as bright!"

Just then she heard a rustle among the vine-leaves that grew in thick luxuriance around her green retreat. A shadow fell across the entrance, and in a moment Richard Rivali stood before her astonished view. A benign smile illuminated his noble countenance as he noticed her artless surprise; and seeing her, like a startled dove, about to take her departure, he sweetly, with a gentle dignity, requested her to retain her place.

"Beauty and fading flowers are hardly fit associates, Miss

Ella," he remarked, seating himself opposite her, and glancing at the withering buds which had been culled for purposes of botanical research.

"None more fitting, I believe; they are emblems of one another," she replied, raising her meek, starry eyes, which she immediately lowered on meeting the mellowed intensity of his gaze.

That timid look was like an inspiration to Rivali. He was tall, six feet three inches,—finely proportioned, with deep, deep blue eyes, and massive chesnut hair. His features were of a princely cast; his step was stately, and a lofty purity of soul was expressed by his whole calm demeanor.

"Miss Ella," he said, bending forward, "methinks that first fair rose in your herbarium was an elegant blossom in its youth. Shall I write you a motto for its fly-leaf?"

Ella ventured to look up again, and shaking back her glossy ringlets, she smiled a beautiful consent.

After a short pause and a singularly puzzled glance at his mute companion, Richard, producing a pencil, scribbled off the following lines:

THE ZEPHYR AND THE ROSE.

A Rose in a garden bloomed peerless and bright,
The fairest and purest around,
Like a queen of the east, in her power and might,
She deigned not to look on the ground,
But enveloped her heart in a thrice-doubled vail
Of deep-blushing petals—that Rose of the dale.

And the moss crept up gently and sheathed the Rose
In a tissue of beautiful green,
And the flower in delight laid her down to repose
In her fanciful shieling unseen;
But the net-work betrayed the rich tints of her cheek
To a by-passing Zephyr deserted and weak.

Entranced, the lone strayer inhaled the perfume
By the sleeper unconsciously shed,—
He was laden with fragrance, that Zephyr, and soon
To the flower he tremblingly said:
"O, magical charmer, let me at thy feet
Linger out an existence too blessedly fleet.

"Let me murmur my wishes at morning and eve,
Ere the starlight in Heaven grows pale,
When the dawning and sun their bright gold meshes weave,
O, beautiful Rose of the vale!
Near the door of thy heart let me flutter and sigh,
In that sweetest abode, dearest Rose, let me die."

A flush of uncertainty mounted his cheek as he handed her the random composition. Ella received it with a graceful inclination, and Richard, while pretending to be enormously busy in arranging her floral effects, kept a stolen surveillance on the workings of her agitated face. After a hasty perusal she quietly laid down the paper, and, with a pleasedly perplexed expression, was once more about to retire, when, with modest trepidation and respectful resistance, the youth impeded her course. Genuine devotion shone out from his eloquent eyes as chastely but glowingly he revealed his affection, and pictured, with irresistible pathos, a future brilliant with tintings of happiness and love. He told, and the sweet, forcible language went straight to the listener's heart, how they worshiped at the same altar, and believed in the same sacramental God. She, gentleness and innocence, would banish all shadows from his soul, and be his consolation in adversity; he would be a shield to protect her from danger, an armor to defend her from ill.

Before Ella Grosvenor left that sequestered arbor she became the affianced of Richard Rivali.

* * * * * * * * *

Mary Kensella and Ella were seated in the drawing-room, engaged on a piece of embroidery, when Arthur radiantly entering, demanded if they had heard the news?

"What may it be, I pray?" asked Mary, looking curiously up from her work.

"Sit down, Arthur," said Ella, "and tell us all about it. We are perfect recluses here: sit down: bring your chair this way, and give us this wonderful intelligence, for wonderful it must be when it effects you thus."

"I have had a final interview with Father Dominick, and my last formidable doubts concerning confession, communion and indulgences, were ignominiously put to flight. Notwithstanding my many troubles, I feel as buoyant as a spirit; I am not clodded down as I used to be, with something without a name."

"O, Arthur," cried Ella, jumping up and kissing him affectionately, "may Jesus be glorified forever! So you are really convinced!—and you were such a skeptic, too. Goodness, I am forcibly attracted back to the time of my own conversion again."

"As bold a front as Arthur offered to the ranks of truth, you, Ella, presented a bolder still," said Mary, quietly,

but with a glorious triumph glancing from her sparkling eye.

"My valiant struggle was worthy of a better cause, than the cause of error, was'nt it Mary?" queried Arthur, inwardly rejoiced at her gleeful expression; "it almost makes me sad to think that I have kept up the unequal contest for more than a year and a half—as obstinate as a Russian all the while. There is the good Father Dominick, how patient he has been. But, Mary and Ella, you surpass everything pertinacious by the vigorous manner in which you kept up the assault."

"And are you not indebted to us now for our undaunted perseverance? We knew it all along, Arthur, dear; we were sure you would ultimately bless us, although at times you scowled so darkly, that we were almost tempted to raise the siege."

"Now," said Mary, "the only trouble is to break the information to your father. Poor Mr. Grosvenor, if he could he brought to see the light himself."

"Yes, Mary, that is my greatest difficulty. My father! Oh! if he could only know how I struggled to resist the approach of grace—how obstinately I shut my eyes to the deformities of the religion in which I was educated, and how tenaciously I clung to every objection against the Catholic Church, he would not blame me and reproach me, as I am confident he will."

"God will befriend you Arthur," suggested Ella, soothingly, "see how marvelously he interposed in my behalf. I was led to expect total banishment from his affection, but the Almighty changed his heart."

"I have always before my memory," answered Arthur, "the words that you, Mary, repeated to me sometime ago. They are my strength in temptation, my support in despondent moments: 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lambs.'"

"And so you are really a convert!" half interrogated Mary, regarding him with a joyous smile, "have you decided the day for your conditional baptism yet?"

"Not yet. I must speak to my father first.

"Bless me, children," said Mr. Grosvenor, approaching, "these are thorough-going tete-a-tete times. Do I ever enter but I find you three engaged in a conclave-like conversation?"

"What's in the wind," demanded Mr. Kensella, briskly, as following his host he caught the jocular remark. "Has England disappeared from the face of the civilized globe and become a terra incognita?"

"From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," intimated Mary, in a laudatory tone.

"Things as improbable may come to pass," laughed Ella, as she went to bring chairs to the gentlemen, "but at present I believe she is among the legion of visible oppressors."

"Spoken like a man," exclaimed Mr. Kensella, in a delightful voice; "you always have a touch of wisdom in your observations, my little girl. That is as much as to say that if she were under the waters, she would continue to oppress."

"If she could by any possibility," responded Arthur, "always leave Mr. Kensella to elucidate any obscurely conceived idea."

"Especially," added his father, "if it has any reference to merry England, a land he so cordially venerates."

"And which, by the way, is so truly worthy of his esteem and love," superadded Mary, "it being understood that he is a Catholic and from the Emerald Isle."

"The young ladies will hardly believe that I have been presented to Father Dominick," said Mr. Grosvenor, with a queer, calm smile.

"Indeed," echoed Ella, and her black eye shone with the lustre of a reverential curiosity.

"You found him a very amiable man?" insinuated Mary, in a confident tone.

"How such an auspicious event could have been brought about, I am at an absolute loss to conceive," said Arthur, with a really puzzled look.

"It was simply brought about without any desire or previous knowledge of mine," replied Mr. Grosvenor, composedly, "a mere street introduction, given by our honest and honored friend, Mr. Richard Kensella."

"Oh," murmured Ella, disappointedly.

"But you don't know all, you fairy," said Mr. Kensella, in a pretended whisper; "your father acknowledged to him that the Catholic religion was a grand Old Faith, and that its equal was not to be found among all the sects of the reformation. He said that his daughter had a theological library, and hinted that he intended to peruse a few of her

ascetics, meaning, (but you must keep the information to yourself,) that he calculated on spending the remainder of his life in doing monastic penance, and believing as the saints of yore."

A quiet, sarcastic smile flitted over Mr. Grosvenor's countenance, as leaning comfortably in his chair, he smoothed the slightly gray hair back from his ample brow.

"Father," said Arthur, a few evenings afterward, "I must solicit a leave of absence, having promised to domicile with Mr. Kensella to-night."

"Certainly, Arthur, but be prudent," responded Mr. Grosvenor, with an admonishing look. "What word shall I bear from you to Ella?" he asked, as they stood at the corner of a street whence their paths diverged.

"My love, and congratulations to Rivali on his success of to-day. Of course he will pay you an evening visit."

"Most probably," and they parted, warmly shaking hands.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN OPENING OF THE HEART.

Take up thy cross, and valiantly,
O'er rocks and deserts, speed thy way;
My star is in the distance dim
To be thy guiding ray.

Thus Jesus spoke, and he who heard
With loving fervor quickly rose,
Nor for a moment short deferred
That journey thick with woes.

The Kensellas were in rhapsodies when informed of Arthur's conversion, and, on the evening above alluded to, they had invited several of their friends to a supper at which Arthur was regarded as The Guest. The stars were waning in the dawning twilight ere the invited began to disperse, and the crepusculous light had deepened into morning's roseate tinge before the last bade farewell to Arthur and their hospitable host. Mary, deeming herself unnoticed, slipped out

into the miniature "Garden of Marly," in the bosom of which her residence was situated. She thought to inhale the refreshing western breezes, and, no strange sight to her, to witness the rising of the sun. But Arthur Grosvenor remarked the maiden's departure, and hurrying after her, he saw her seat herself in an iron chair on the brink of a bubbling fount.

"Mary," he said, gliding quietly to where she sat, "this is a fitting retreat after last night's recreation. I admire your sylvan tastes."

"Arthur!" was the half-surprised and indirect reply.

"Yes, Mary, I too would ain catch the winds of the early autumn, for my brow is fevered, and hot thoughts are in my heart. The musical fall of the waters of this beautiful fountain are soothing to my ear, and while I listen I cannot help thinking of the loving fountain of beauty, grace, and piety that is mirrored in this pellucid sheet."

"Pooh! Arthur, you are pleased to be poetically romantic," said Mary, very placidly, as she carelessly stooped to pluck a tiny violet that happened to bloom at her feet.

"Oh, I have longed for this opportunity, I have sought for this opportunity. Mary, listen to me now—let me tell you that a flame, pure but volcanic, burns this instant in my heart, and always, ever has burned there. You alone, Mary, are capable of mastering and directing this flame—you can feed or smother it; you can make the heart from which it issues, either a light-house of peace and hope, or a black and mouldering ruin. Oh! do not frown upon my humble suit—we have known each other from childhood, and, may I fondly add—we have *loved?* Complete the measure of my happiness—let me lead to the altar, on the Sunday of my First Communion, one who has been my guardian angel through life. Let me lay the laurels that fame has awarded me at your feet—let my prospects become blended with yours—let us, Mary—may I say, beloved?—face the dangers of the world together—let us fight in unison the battles of the Cross."

Arthur's voice became inaudible, but his lips still quivered and his eye still spoke. The carmine flush that betokens hope and fear dyed his animated face, and, unconsciously it would appear, his hands folded themselves into an attitude of supplication. Mary Kensella remained unmoved—once, the painted tinge of crimson overshadowed her countenance,

but it was only for a moment; in an instant all was serene as the summer's sky. She startled Arthur by the solemnity of her manner, as, crushing the violet between her fingers, and looking him straight in the face, she replied: "Arthur, do not think thus of Mary Kensella, for know that she is already betrothed."

Had a sudden shower of arrows transfixed the astounded listener he could not have been more utterly astonished, or more thoroughly wretched. In accents hoarse with emotion, and eyes painfully wild, he exclaimed: "What have you said. *You* are already betrothed? Have I then been the dupe of appearances? Have I nursed a passion that will destroy me, an adder that will sting me to death? I had more faith in you, Mary Kensella," he continued, in a voice of plaintive reproof, "I had more trust in your generosity. You were the lonely star that glittered in my mental horizon, and to win beams from your gleaming, I labored hard and long. What care I now for the plaudits of the thousands, for the gilded smile of fame? O Fates!" and he vehemently stamped his foot, "ye have played me false—ye have betrayed the innocent and confiding. Now, if you can, heal the wounds you have so ruthlessly inflicted, or destroy the remaining vestige of a heart that once was mine. May I ask, Miss Kensella," he proceeded, with forced and bitter composure, "may I ask this successful rival's name?"

"Arthur," she said, in a tone in which soothing pity and melancholy were equally blended, "is this putting into practice the lessons of the divine Faith, which, with the help of God, you now profess? Is this that meekness which the slighted Jesus inculcated; that submission to the will of Heaven which Mary evinced at the foot of the Cross? Let not your rebellious feelings triumph, Arthur Grosvenor, lest perhaps, you may fruitlessly repent."

"*You* speak of endurance," returned the wildly excited youth. "*You* speak of crushing indignant thought. *You* speak of patience and ignominious content. Ha! ha! Those who have not suffered may put such motives forward; those who have broken hearts may trample on the bleeding ruins, and then preach submission to the mangled, poisoned things. Yes! and while mutilating them, they will smile and bid their helpless victims look out to the silver tracts of hope. Ha! ha!" He paused a moment from sheer exhaustion; then calmer, but evidently with effort, he resumed:—

"Again I would demand, Miss Kensella, who my happy and successful rival is?"

Mary's large eyes were partially flooded with tears; her words were tremulous as, with touching sweetness, she replied:—

"I forgive you freely and entirely, Arthur; but know, I am the affianced Bride of the Lamb!"

Arthur became like a person suddenly petrified; a ghastly pallor succeeded the deep-dyed flush, and sinking on his knees and bowing his forehead down to the moistened earth, with heart-rending earnestness he muttered an inarticulate prayer. Mary also knelt; a full quarter of an hour elapsed before either thought of arising. At length the youth stood up—his countenance was composed, but still appallingly white, and gazing intently on the liquid waters of the fountain—

"Jesus," he murmured, almost inaudibly, "forgives me, but He demands a sacrifice in expiation."

"What do you mean?" asked Mary, as a strange and indefinable idea took possession of her mind.

"Jesus demands a sacrifice in expiation," was the unaltered reply.

Unheeding her repeated inquiries, he looked up into the clear, blue, morning sky, as if something there were visible to him. His eye brightened, his cheek reddened, and after the lapse of a few minutes, "is it to the Seminary of St. Sulpice?" he inquired.

An unearthly answer must have been accorded, for Arthur smiled assent, and turning to his confounded companion—

"Yes," he said, "I, too, will immolate myself upon the altar of religion. Jesus wills that I should become a minister of His word. I attempted, Mary, to steal a bride from Heaven, and, in satisfaction for the crying insult, I shall devote myself to win souls to the Sacred Heart."

"If you have any regard for feminine curiosity, tell me, Arthur Grosvenor, what you mean by this most incoherent speech."

They seated themselves side by side on a bench that overhung the fountain. The bright, red beams of the sun-god danced merrily in the branches of the whistling trees, and illuminated with a golden lustre, the white foam, produced by the constant play of the waters of the fount. Little warblers chirped songfully, emerald dews gleamed on the silken grass, and lay, like diamonds, on the bosoms of the awakened

flowers, and soft, sweet winds hovered lovingly over the beautiful scene. Sly squirrels peeped mischievously from their cages of verdant boughs, and timid, cautious rabbits frolicked over the velvety moss.

"Mary," responded Arthur, "a change has taken place in my soul. I thought to make an earthly being my idol. I thought to labor and win fame and glory, and lay my trophies at a mortal's feet. I hoped for happiness in the sunshine of a human smile, and I thought to live a life of tranquil bliss. But now the illusory vail has fallen from my vision; I see that I was robbing Heaven of its rights, and that I was transferring the homage of my heart from its sovereign Master to the creature of His hand. Reparation is due. Listen, Mary Kensella. I throw my future prospects to the winds. I will retire to Paris, and study in the Seminary of St. Sulpice, under the auspices of its saintly founder."

"Praises be to God, and thanks to His holy Mother!" exclaimed Mary, with streaming eyes; but, checking herself, she said, "do not be over hasty, Arthur; perhaps this resolution is only the offspring of a sudden disappointment, or may be a delusion of the unsleeping enemy of mankind. God has done much for you in gathering you into the Fold. Mark well all the consequences of your step; rashness has wrecked many shallops stemming the tide of life."

"It is the Divine Will, intelligibly declared," answered Arthur, with emotion; "I have heard it from the mouth of a Messenger of the Word."

"May it not have been a vivid fancy?"

"It could not, I am convinced."

Silence on both sides succeeded—they were returning their thanks.

"Do you not anticipate opposition from your father?" demanded Mary, after a few minutes had elapsed; "will not a word from him, whom you love so much, overturn this generous impulse?"

"Impulse! You estimate my constancy sadly below its mark. However, I sincerely trust, with the assistance of Heaven, that no human agency will undermine my fixed resolve. As soon as possible I will commence preparations for my departure."

"God speed you," she fervently responded, "and give you grace and courage to remain steadfast to the last. I

will now, Arthur, inform you about myself. Only for you, I would have been cloistered away, ere this, in the home of my affections, at Namur. But to gratify my yearning desires, would I leave the sharer of my childish sports to perish? No, Arthur I longed to see you a member of the Catholic Church, and therefore it was that I delayed my entrance into the sanctuary of my Spouse. He has rewarded me abundantly; more richly than I deserve. I can now, without delay, recross the ocean, and labor unknown in Europe for the instruction of the little ones of Christ."

"Generous, unselfish Mary!" cried Arthur, "unceasing prayer on my part, can hardly repay my debts. Oh! the rash language to which I have given utterance! It will ever dwell in my memory and embitter the sweetest moments of my after life. It will be scorpion-stings to my conscience, headstrong and reckless that I am."

"Cease regretting, Arthur," Mary gently urged; "if you had not spoken, this beautiful change would, probably, have never taken place. I said I forgave you—and not only that, but I thank you. Come, let us inform my parents of your glorious intentions. Although my beloved father would fain have me by his side, still he does not begrudge me to Heaven. Oh! it will be bliss to them to know that you will belong to God. Come, Arthur, come!" and in her awakened enthusiam, she almost drew him after her towards the house.

A trial of momentous importance awaited the sanguine young man. How would he break the revelation to his father? To tell him of his change of religion, was already a dreaded task; but now to add that he was about to become a minister of the obnoxious Roman Church, ah! that was something before which he almost quailed. It being early, he snatched an hour's repose, and after a slight repast he betook himself to his office and his books. In the evening he followed his father to the library, and when well assured that they were alone, he seated himself by the arm-chair which his parent usually occupied.

"Well, sir," inquired Arthur, "what is your opinion concerning our tall young visitor, Rivali?"

"A spendid young man," responded Mr. Grosvenor, "with a seemingly brilliant future."

"He appears desirous to become our brother-in-law?"

"You have only just discovered it?" said his father, with a genial smile. "Well—but you have other things in your

head. He asked my consent long ago to pay his addresses to Ella, and I, of course, had no earthly objection to oppose."

"He was a desperate hand at study in his boyhood," answered Arthur; "nobody could think of beating him, and then he had such a flow of language and poetry at his command. His star is of the first magnitude, the lawyers unwillingly concede."

"And I suppose, in the course of time," said Mr. Grosvenor, "that it will assume the fair proportions of the moon, and finally burst out with the splendor of an eastern sun."

"Yet Rivali is a Catholic," hinted Arthur, with a somewhat troubled look.

"Most happily for himself," resumed his father. "Ella is headstrong, after a manner, and I am certain if she had the ill-fortune to marry a Protestant, she would not allow the poor fellow a minute's peace, till he conformed to the Romish Faith."

"I hope you do not find Ella less docile, less tractable, less affectionate, since her entrance into the Church of Rome?" inquired Arthur, with very apparent anxiety.

"How is this?" laughed Mr. Grosvenor, "if there is any change, decidedly, it is not for the worst."

"And what would you say, my father, if your son were to disown the creed of his ancestors, and acknowledge himself an adherent of the Catholic Faith?"

"Ere such an event should come to pass," said the senior gentleman, regarding the youth with a searching glance, "I will beseech the Almighty to sweep me from the face of creation, which ever afterwards would be an insufferable hell."

"Would you not forgive him," pleaded Arthur, "for the sake of the mother who lies cold and silent under yonder marble stone? Would you not pardon him in consideration of the love he always bore you? Father, would you not receive and bless him, as you often blessed of yore?"

"In the name of mercy, Arthur, tell me what you mean by these random words? But if your dreadful secret is what I apprehend, keep, keep it locked in your bosom, and do not bring my silver hairs in sorrow to the grave."

"Oh! you must know it, father, I may not retain it any longer. Say beforehand, however, that you will forgive your son."

"Say rather, that I will curse him," cried Mr. Grosvenor,

with anger-flashing eyes. "What foul work is this? Has the devil taken visible form to seduce my children from their allegiance? Has the crumbling old edifice of Rome sent forth its emissaries to allure them from my embrace? Alas! alas! why is this undeserved ignominy heaped on the head of a worthy descendant of the Grosvenors? What have I done, O God, to merit this punishment at thy hands?"

"Speak not thus, lest you arouse the sleeping vengeance of Heaven—father, do not give expression to these rash appeals."

"Answer me," gasped Mr. Grosvenor, shaking Arthur rudely by the shoulder, "answer, boy, have you too leagued yourself against the author of your existence? Have you consented to link your destiny with priestcraft and Catholic abominations? Oh! where shall I hide my countenance? Where shall the last of the Grosvenors conceal himself from public disgrace?"

"Better out with the worst," muttered Arthur. "Father, not only am I about to become a Roman Catholic, but I shall resign my profession—and—"

"Go on, sir," said Mr. Grosvenor, in a voice of the sternest composure, "I can hear what you have to say."

"Commence my studies for the priesthood."

Mr. Grosvenor did not storm, nor rage, nor threaten. He simply sank into his chair, and, uttering one short shriek of dismal, rending agony, concealed his face in his hands. Arthur knelt before him and wildly implored forgiveness; but he was unheeded till his importunities became too urgent, when, without looking up, the father whispered below his breath,

"Depart—let me alone in my old age to struggle with my despair—let me die a heart-broken, forsaken man."

His tone was one of touching sadness. Arthur flung his arms around his neck, and kissed his cold temples till the frozen blood again circulated in his veins. Throwing himself on his knees, he gazed tearfully but mutely into his parent's face, and the father partially relented when Arthur's hitherto dutiful conduct rose unbidden before his view. He saw him the gentle child, the frolicsome youth, the brilliant man, and through all, his heart's delight. He spoke not, he sighed not, but extended his trembling hand and laid it on the kneeler's head. It was gratefully taken as a token of reconciliation, and Arthur vacated the room.

Mr. Grosvenor was silent for some minutes; "Why is it, O ye Heavens," at length he said, "that I am thus made an object to be jeered at by my own? Why is it that those whom I have loved are the first to turn venomously around? Have I cherished a child to disseminate the seeds of a religion my wise ancestors despised? Ah! woe is me! He spoke of studying for the priesthood? Can I not lay an interdiction on the infernal project? He paused and paced the apartment with uncertain step, now standing perfectly still, again walking as rapidly as if his life depended on his speed. "Pooh!" he continued, with a bitter smile, "fatherly interdiction, now! Who but myself would dream of such a course? Arthur Grosvenor is in a free country, fully of age to provide for himself, and select his own religion. What can I do to prevent him from following his inclinations. Absolutely nothing—which is a pity—pity—pity. Well, let him do as he wills—perhaps he may repent. Louis at least shall escape contamination. He is at an orthodox Protestant college, and there he shall remain until he is unalterably convinced of the truth of his father's faith. He must not make the acquaintance of the Kensellas. Hark! Is that a funeral knell?"—and he started—but it was only the unpoetical supper-bell, summoning him to his evening meal.

Time sped, and the day appointed for Arthur's reception into the bosom of the Church auspiciously arrived. It was previously arranged that he should take voyage on the following afternoon, so the dawning found him and his sister divided between grief and joy. Mr. Grosvenor could not be persuaded to be present at his son's abjuration. It was amid the pomp and swell of a solemn High Mass that Arthur received his First Communion, having made his confession and been privately baptized on the foregoing eve. Ella and Mary could not restrain their tears of sympathetic emotion; Mr. Kensella rubbed his hands in glee, smiling at friend and foe, while hosts of acquaintances sent up the most fervent prayers for the interesting and courageous convert. Arthur was literally transported—an hour or two after Mass he spent in colloquy with his God.

"Ella," said Rivali, coming up to Miss Grosvenor, "I am going to accompany Arthur across the sea."

"You are!" she responded, slightly coloring, "this is the first I have heard to that effect."

"Do you not think, dearest Ella, that it would seem intolerably desolate to let him depart alone? Some of my bosom-friends are studying at St. Sulpice—I will introduce them to Arthur, and then hasten back—to claim my beautiful bride."

Ella blushed, as seizing her hand and pressing it gently, he whispered a few sentences in her ear.

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"I shall not set out before Rivali's return," said Mary Kensella, in an answer to a question propounded by Ella. "It would be too meanly ungenerous to leave you entirely alone, and besides," she added, a merry twinkle brightening her eye, "I should like to inform the community at large, that I was bridesmaid to the misanthropical, pensive Ellie Grosvenor."

"Before I forget it, Mary, have you recently heard from Ettie Austin? Her image unaccountably haunts me?"

"You received the latest intelligence somewhat over six months ago. Have you forgotten, Ella, the queer, impulsive style of her incoherent epistle? This minute she laughs, the next she weeps, then she starts, and at length proceeds so cautiously that her meaning and intentions are utterly beyond my comprehension."

"Oh! I have heard since then, Mary. Her last is from the country, dated June, and, bless you, does'nt she mention the letter Sister Angelique dispatched to her, based on our information! She was desperately puzzled to conceive how Sister could have come to such unpalatable knowledge."

"Speaking of Mariette brings back the happy times we three enjoyed right vividly," said Mary, forgetting her stoicism as the memories began rushing through her mind.

"Blessed hours we spent in the cedar arbor that was reached by the currant-lined path. And then the gothic chapel, was n't it beautiful, in the midst of the linden trees! There were the garden plots so diligently cultivated by the girls, and the sweet Madonna from her pedestal smiling down on the labor of our hands."

"What shall I do when you are gone, Mary? I will refuse to be comforted—I will sit alone in the parlor and sing mournful songs of the olden times, and no human ear will be there to listen, no human voice to applaud."

"Where will Mr. Richard Rivali be in the meanwhile," demanded Mary, remorselessly. "In truth, Ella, you only

want me to coax and flatter you, but I declare I will do no such a thing. You ought to be ashamed, Miss."

"Only that I hear my father's footsteps, Mary, I would condescend to enlighten you. However, you are on my black books; we will have a day of reckoning before September is out. Wonder who is with pa—perhaps it is your father, I will go and meet them."

Several strange gentlemen accompanied Mr. Kensella. Ella received them with graceful affability, and when she and Mary were requested to sing, they immediately complied, with a modest air, and commendable alacrity. Their beautiful voices and superior instrumental performances, elicited enthusiastic encomiums, and, amid a shower of applause, they blushingly effected their escape to a neighboring room.

CHAPTER XVII.

LIGHTS.

In dreams I wandered by the shore
Of an unearthly island bright,
Where ocean-waves were silver'd o'er
With gleamings of a foamy white:
And on its golden strand there stood,
An angel bending o'er the sea,
And taking from the sleeping flood,
The gems, to form a crown for thee.

Days, weeks, and even months, rolled down into the stream of eternity, and yet no tiding of the missing Mariette was received by her sorrowing relations. Mr. Clarendon, so to speak, was worn away to a shadow; his keen eyes became fearfully prominent, and charitable people were not scarce, who intimated that the old gentleman's intellect was wandering. Rumor, however, is a busy dame, and generally founds her assertions on very questionable bases. Betty Carey was beside herself with grief—she listlessly overlooked the domestics, sometimes humming a plaintive ditty, and often reciting her beads. A dark frown settled on Mr. Austin's severe but handsome countenance, and the poor mother's cheeks were sallow from trouble and tears.

About a week after Mariette's disappearance, her parents, and grandfather were silently seated in the parlor. The little ones had retired to rest, and the great monitor-clock sullenly told the hour of nine. A vessel of steaming punch occupied the center of the table, while glasses of exquisite cutlery reflected in every direction, a thousand magnificent hues. Mr. Clarendon was the first to speak, after a pause:—

"My scheme is completed," he exclaimed, "quiet now, lest it should escape. I will saddle my horse at the dawn of day, and ride out into the country. Mariette must be there. Do you remember, Lawrence, when she was a little girl? She loved her old grandfather then better than any body else, and I am sure she loves me yet. Who will dare to gainsay me?"—and he cast defiant glances on his statue-like hearers.

"Your trouble will be useless, my dear father," said Mrs. Austin, with a heavy sigh. "It is morally certain that she is not within a bowshot of her home. Have compassion on your steed: the poor animal has seen service enough of late."

"Peace, woman, peace," impatiently interrupted Mr. Clarendon, "I have a notion she is in the woods."

"Leave the unworthy creature to her fate," interposed Mr. Austin, placidly. "She made the first foul blot in our family records. She may live to repent her accursed madness, but she shall *never* be forgiven by me." The low, determined tone in which the last sentence was uttered, sent a thrill of horror through the mother's heart. Mr. Clarendon started from his chair, and confronting his son-in-law,—

"Say you she shall not be forgiven?" he interrogated. "Yes, Lawrence, she must, she must! You will find that all is right. I will seek her and bring her back, and she will sing her admirable sea-songs, and play on the piano and harp."

Mrs. Austin wept; her husband silently poured out some glasses of the fragrant beverage, which had the effect of exhilarating their drooping spirits, and a lively conversation ensued.

"Heigh-ho!" at length exclaimed Mr. Clarendon, "half-past ten o'clock! Hard work before me on the morrow—good night, my children. I will bring poor Mariette back."

True to his word, he was ready for the road on the following morning, long before the rising of the sun. His prepar-

ations were completed, and he had set spurs to his charger, ere the household was astir. Since the disappearance of his granddaughter, the idea to bring her back was his monomania. To oppose him was to render him desperate; an attempt at reasoning made him furious. He had heretofore declared, that this trial was to be his last, if he did not succeed in discovering her—he would lay him down to die.

The faint, pink clouds of sunset, fleckered the western sky, and the young, new moon, displayed her silver edge in the zenith, before the travel-worn, and unsuccessful searcher returned to his expectant friends. He was grievously disappointed and dejected: with Spartan conciseness he answered the questions propounded, and, after a slight repast, retired to his own chamber, to muse over the events of the day. The thought of rescuing Mariette, gradually faded away, but melancholy took its place, and, the element of hope being wanting, the poor old man soon sank down into the quiet and stillness of the grave.

One Sunday, about a month after the decease of Mr. Clarendon, Betty Carey remained praying in Father Beechinor's chapel, long after the vesperal chants were ended, and the last of the worshipers had taken his homeward way. She was perfectly absorbed in her devotions, and how could she be otherwise, when she was conscious that she was at the feet af her bleeding Jesus, kissing his wounded members and adoring His Sacred Heart? Is there a Catholic breathing who has not experienced the sweetest emotions when alone before the altar of propitiation? The etheralized senses seem to hear the songs of the pinioned messengers, who throng in numberless, invisible, legions around the Sanctuary steps—we appear to behold the golden censors waving, and the aromatical incense curling up, and forming itself into feathery wreaths upon the altar-throne:—we fancy we see the millions of unborn angels, vailing their faces in their wings, and bending low before their humbled Creator, and we watch the cherubim tremulously sing the praises of the Incarnate Word—Betty Carey was sensible of the greatness of the privilege that was hers. Sometimes her petitions were audible, and once she said: "O Divine an marciful Jasus, keep me undher yer most holy purtection, till I discover me foster chile again. She is yonng an innocint me sweet Redeemer—she will repint for this sinful step. An shure its your will, blessed Mother of God, that I should

look fur her, and bring her into the fould of your adorable Son." She paused, gazed wistfully through the stained windows at the dark but quiet sky, and then beseechingly, but half in doubt, she went on, "Yis! yis! my Jesus! I feel that you want me to go—but if yez would let me know by a little tunder or lightin, or anything onornary at all, that you would be me guide an purtection, shure tis I that would be everlastinly obleeged." Her conscience, however, smote her for this bold address, and she added a simple, heart-wrung prayer, invoking forgiveness for the offence.

And yet it would seem that her request was about to be granted. She continued her ejaculations considerable longer, until, at length, a change in the Heavens attracted her astonished eye. "O thin, praise, honor, an glory be to God, if this is'nt the wondherful alteration intirely," she muttered, as the huge atramental clouds piled themselves along the darkened firmament—"Shure its the Lord himself is thankful to me, an to listen to me at all, at all," and her body began to oscillate with the precision and regularity of a pendulum.

She said well when she averred that there was an alteration in the sky. Ebony vapors disposed themselves, layer upon layer, over cloudlets of a lighter hue, gradually increasing in volume, until, finally, not a speck of brightness dotted the eternal space. Out from the thick somberness, darted vivid flashes of lightning, and the hoarse, guttural rumblings of the thunder became oppressively distinct. Roar followed gleam: the black curtains of the sky were deepened, if possible, in color, and poor Mrs. Carey was beginning to entertain apprehensions of constrained detention, when down from the inky dome, poured an inundating torrent of rain. Presently the gratings of the thunder, subsided into a hollow, revengeful moan; the red and angry lightning appeared but in silver streaks, and a grateful freshness was on the laden wings of the winds. By and by, the tiny patter of the rain, gave evidence that the storm was over; fantastical wreaths of variegated foam sailed airily in the clear looking zenith, and a beautiful rainbow sprung lightly into existence, stretching from corner to corner of the sky.

Betty made her exit joyfully, and hastening home, sought admission into Mrs. Austin's room. Her master and mistress were present. A semi-serious, semi-dolorous expression

was depicted on her countenance, as, holding herself in a picturesque position, she opened her mouth and spake:—

"Mrs. Austin, acushla, tis I that am I heart-broken and wary—but shure, ma'am, I have tuck a resolve."

"You have," said the addressed, with the semblance of a smile on her mournful features, "a good and judicious one, I am confident, but pray what may it be?"

"It sorrows me greatly, but I may as well out wid it at wanst. I am goin to lave yez to-morrow."

"How is this!" shouted Mr. Austin, jumping from his chair. "Has anybody offended you? Speak Mrs. Carey, and you shall be instantly avenged."

"May my blessin, an the blessin o' God Almighty, descind on ye now an forever more, amin," said Betty, devoutly signing herself with the sign of the cross, as the big tears of gratitude gushed into her fervent eyes, "but it is'nt that, mavourneen, that's taken me away, but something that was revailed to me from above."

"Away with these silly notions, my dear woman," remarked Mr. Austin, in a conciliatory tone, "we cannot spare you, and you must not leave."

"Listen to me, av you plaise," remonstrated Betty Carey, "I cannot rest here in luxury and plinty, when she that I suckled is sorely in need of my help."

The mother's eye brightened with gratification, but the father frowned.

"Yis, sir," continued Betty, seeing she had to do battle with the latter. "Yis, Mr. Austin, I will leave your house on to-morrow, an thravel far an near, till I come across me foster child. The only one I had, me little Maureen, is now wid the angels in Heaven, but she is comin wid me to show me where Miss Ettie is."

"Thank you, Mrs. Carey, thank you, for your attachment to my unworthy daughter, but think upon the risk you are about to incur. It is very unsafe for a woman to travel alone, and even if you succeed in finding her, what good will you have attained? She is married to a penniless invalid, and she is done with me."

"As fur the thravelin, Mr. Austin, achnd, God and the Blessed Virgin will be wid me: but I must be movin now, an puttin me little duds to rights. If I have any opportunity at all, at all, I will let yez know all about her, the poor, misguided dear."

"But if you are successful, Betty, you will come back to us, will you not?" asked her mistress in a voice of concern.

"I will, acushla, where else would I think o' coverin me head?"

It was on a beautiful morning towards the middle of September, that Betty bade adieu to a family with whom she had spent many happy years. Stepping hopefully in the cars, she tried to collect her thoughts, but as, one by one, the familiar buildings glided from her eager view, feelings of desolation and remorse began to fill her soul. "Who knows," she soliloquized, "but I am going on a wild-goose chase? At the next stoppin place I'll unlight, but where will I turn my footsteps? Oh! glory be to the Eternal Father, but may be I am doin wrong." She drew forth her rosary publicly, and devoutly commenced its recitation; the pious action considerably eased her mind, and she could not help entertaining a sweet assurance of success.

We will not follow Betty Carey through the vexatious incidents of her two week's travel. Suffice it to inform the interested, that she turned her face to the west, and with her eye on the firmament, as if her polar star was there, she unhesitatingly cut through forests and uncultivated wilds. Her little chamois leather purse was well stocked with yellow pieces, and, although she stoutly refused to receive more than her lawful wages, still Mr. Austin was a man who knew how to value faithful services, and Mrs. Austin insisted on her taking a sum for her unfortunate child.

The last evening of September, she spent in a farm-house of unpretending dimensions. It was literally situated in the depths of the wild, wild woods. The ground in the immediate vicinity of the cabin, was tolerably well cultivated, but beyond, all looked as primeval as if the white man's footsteps had never been imbedded in the soil, or, as if his exterminating ax had never devastated the Indian's sacred haunts. And its occupants, too, had the appearance of a primitive people. They welcomed the wanderer kindly, and prepared a plentiful supper of hoe-cakes, ham and eggs, pennyroyal tea, with numerous rural delicacies, not ordinarily served up. Betty was triumphantly installed queen of the banquet by planting her on a three-legged, backless chair, at the head of the sumptuous board. The good housewife communicated to her attentive listener the history of their vicissitudes and trials, and what was more acceptable still, drew a charcoal

sketch in language, of the scattered settlements around. Another pioneering couple, she averred, had lately arrived in their midst. They were handsome and young, "and I will tell you a suspected secret," she continued, drawing closer to her auditor, and lowering her voice to the mystical whispering key; "why, it is sed by them as orter know, that they is a pair of lovyers, that runned away and got married, seein as how the ole folks would'nt consent to it nohow." Betty was beside herself with exultation, but she thought it best to play the innocent, and acquire all the information to be obtained.

"Why, thin, now, yer afther tellin me that, are yez?" she asked, with the intention of drawing her out.

"My ole man, an Jonathan, thar, helped to run up the logs, an I have see'd the critters meself. I tell you, they wor no more meant for the forests, than the president of Californy hisself."

"Well, now, that bates every thing!" ejaculated Betty, impressively; "its beyant the comprehinsion of womankind to undherstand sich tricks as thim."

"You orter have seen the gould hoops on her ears and fingers, an the fine gownds as that woman had on her back. An she has a purty eye and face to boot, and her husband he is handsome, but he will never do fur the woods."

Betty discovered, to her infinite satisfaction, that the pioneering couple were only three miles distant, towards the setting sun. Ere retiring to repose, she produced her invaluable Key of Heaven, and with as much devout composure, as if she were in a cloistered nunnery, recited the litanies of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Joseph, in gratitude for her anticipated success.

Refusing next morning the kindly offer of an escort, she deposited a shining coin in the hand of her benevolent hostess, which coin, the said hostess indignantly rejected. But Betty pressed it on the boy Jonathan, and the boy Jonathan, being a boy, accepted it with visible delight. After hastily dispatching an elaborate breakfast, she prepared for the road with a joyous heart. The fresh autumn-wind imparted its hilarious buoyancy to her now excited spirits; her step regained the elasticity of buried years, and a happy, youthful smile filled her cheeks, and smoothed her forehead, in defiance of insidious wrinkles, the effect of age and care. The leaves were searing on the trees; a tract of variegated

forest, yellow, brown, green, red, and of indescribable hues, beautifully extended before her, and Betty thought that, only for the lonesomeness, and inconvenience of the place, Mariette could never have chosen a more picturesque and desirable spot.

"The house of God mus'n't be far from her at any rate," she mused, "for I know she would n't rush into the heart of the forest, if the Chapel was n't very convaynient. Its the happiest chance in the world that I hit on the identical route; but shure tis the Lord, glory be to His name, that had His hand on me, an His marciful designs on that child."

At this critical juncture her eye danced with pleasure, for afar, through the thick foliage, she espied the outline of a rude log hut. On a nearer approach, she discovered that it was better erected than the generality of such ready constructions; the immense balks of timber were more artistically cut, and cemented more closely together. The apparition gave wings to her feet. Away she flew over the luxuriant grass, and soon fell fainting in a transport of exultation at the entrance of a cultivated plot. It was really the residence of the aristocratical Mariette Austin. With a wild, sweet song on her lip, she was fluttering among the fading shrubs, when the cry escaping from the prostrate Betty, brought her in an instant to her relief. We may well imagine her joy, and not improbably her shame, at this most unexpected arrival. She clasped the hands of the faithful domestic, and without articulating a syllable led her in the humble cot.

"O, Betty?" she interrogated, kissing her radiant forehead, "what lucky Providence guided you to this outlandish retreat?"

"Don't be afther askin me, alanna bawn, but tell me about yerself; an are ye happy an well?"

"My parents, Betty; what of my parents?" murmured Mariette, burying her face in her hands, and through her fingers the crystalline tears trickled fast and bright.

"Ah mavourneen, mavourneen, how could yez expect thim to be?"

"My grandfather?" and the tears came faster still.

"I'll tell you all about home, a colleen, at a more convaynient moment, but now, arragal, compose yer narves, for I declares I won't answer a word."

Betty was notorious for adhering to her avowed intentions. Mariette knew this of old, and submitting to adverse circum-

stances, she prepared herself to answer propounded interrogatories, as fully as her prudence would admit.

"An how do you manage the household, me honey; do you hire a sarvint to cook, and get ready the house?"

Mariette smiled. "Heretofore, I confess," she answered, "that we have been under a great many expenses, but lately I contrive to set about the business myself, making, I assure you, a most sorry hand of the work; but Raphael estimates my abilities very highly."

Betty cast a furtive glance around the humble apartment, and lowering her voice so as to be almost inaudible—

"Tell me acushla," she demanded, "wor you married by the priest o' the Church?"

Mariette's became cheeks purple; a passionate flood of tears gushed hotly from her eyes, and striking her open palm against her forehead, "O God!" she muttered, "shall I never know peace again?"

Betty accepted this as a confirmation of more than her worst suspicions. Now was her turn for anguish; and sinking down on her knees, she uttered the mournful wail that none but the Irishwoman knows.

Mariette perceived her error in an instant, and proudly drawing herself up to her most stately proportions, she coldly informed her, that she was wedded by a minister of the Protestant faith.

"No use in wheening over spilt milk, at anyrate," was Betty's heroical conclusion, as discarding her woe-begone expression, she inquired, after the gentleman himself.

"He is now in the field," said Mrs. Russell, cheerfully, "but I expect that he will soon be back."

On the eventful morning that Mariette so mysteriously disappeared, she was hurried by Raphael immediately, to a Catholic Church, but the priest requested them to wait till the following Sunday, when, after the publication of the bans, he would be most happy to perform the sacred rites. This was not at all in consonance with the ideas and plans of the impatient lovers. Irma was with them, to act in the capacity of bridesmaid, and Raphael, more ruffled than ever she had seen him before, caught Mariette by the hand, and hurriedly drew her to the carriage.

"He supposed that we would remonstrate and implore," he scornfully muttered, "but happily he is not the only minister in town."

"Whither are we driving, Raphael," demanded Mariette, when the horses began to move.

"To the Episcopal minister; he will not be overladen with scrupulous restrictions; but if he is—why, the squire is at hand"

Mariette was horrified, and at first gave a positively decided refusal, but Irma's specious reasoning on the necessity of urgency, and Raphael's eloquent appeals overcame her, for the moment, invincible resolution. She was married outside of the pale of the Catholic Church.

No sooner was the ceremony concluded, than they affectionately bade adieu to their companion, and were, at a rapid rate, on the road to their forest home.

Some readers have undoubtedly asked themselves, what possible interest had Miss de Percherere, in using her influence to promote a union between Raphael and Mariette. We will let them, as the farmer's wife said to Betty Carey, into a suspected secret. It was a received opinion, among Mariette's fashionable friends, that the rich, gay, and beautiful damsel, harbored a secret affection for Mr. Salisbury, although time and again, she had told them, that such was not the fact. World-wise people predicted a brilliant future; aspiring young misses heard the report with ill-concealed chagrin; in short, everybody had become acquainted with the fact, and everybody knew the nuptial day, with the rather important exception of the innocent heroine herself! Now, be it understood, that Irma was in love with Charles Salisbury's prospects; besides, he was a very handsome young man; very amiable towards the ladies, and very generous in regards to his purse. She was ambitious, destitute of even the semblance of a heart, and ready, when gold was the glittering attraction, to surmount all obstacles to reach it. Under these circumstances, it was with unbounded satisfaction, that she noticed the impression which Raphael Russell, a relation of her own, made on the impulsive Mariette. She did not care about advancing the interest of her cousin; she even denied their consanguinity, but she looked upon it as a glorious means of ridding herself of a formidable rival. Mariette, as unsuspecting as a child, innocently thought that pure benevolence was Irma's only motive, and, therefore, she listened to her advices, against the counsels of her truest friends. Raphael knew her better, but he was indebted to her on this and on other occasions, and after some private

admonitions, he concluded to keep his peace and never speak of his relationship to Irma. When the latter saw the carriage depart, after the celebration of the marriage ceremony, a grin of malicious satisfaction distorted her regular features: "The fool!" she exclaimed, "she has given me an invaluable chance."

The log cabin was in readiness to receive its mistress. Raphael had been the overseer of its construction. It was only one story high, and divided into two apartments; one answered the threefold purpose of kitchen, parlor, and dinning-room, the other was cabinet and chamber. Standing on a rough and ready platform, Russell's piano was the most conspicuous article in the house. Then there was a plain, deal table; three or four rustic chairs; a *choice* collection of cooking utensils, and tin and crockery ware. A wardrobe of high pretensions decorated the diminutive chamber; the bed was covered with a really superb counterpane, and snowy curtains, ornamented with fringes, gracefully trailed on the floor.

A profusion of transplanted grape-vines clambered up the sides of the little hermitage, completely blinding its two solitary windows, so that, when the rays of the sun came down in their summer fierceness, they alighted on thick green lattice-work, and shed over the interior, a broken emerald light. Now the rich purple cluster, peeping out from the protecting leaves, appeared exceedingly picturesque. Some paces from the cottage, a rippling brook, clear as a string of diamonds, cut transversly through the forest, and meeting with a wandering stream, a little further ahead, they fraternally concluded to journey together to the beautiful Ohio's banks.

"You know, coleen avourneen, that I didn't come here to upbraid you, but to do all that I can in your aid. Och! shure me heart is wedded to yez, darlint, an I couldn't rest aisy day nor night, till I found out where yez wor at last."

"God bless you, Betty, God reward you for these kind words," said Mariette, seizing her nurse by the hand, while her eyes dilated with a wild and fearful joy, "but in the name of the Heaven you hope to gain, tell me how are my parents, tell me what my grandfather thinks of the one he so foolishly loved?"

There was no escape from that fixed and penetrating gaze; no possible means of evading that searching glance; Betty Cary replied in a low, impressive voice: "The father that

cherished you, Miss Ettie darlint, and the mother that loved you betther thin her own heart's blood, is well of all but grief, an Mr. Clarendon, Saints be his companions, sorrys for ye no more."

Delicate as was the intimation, Mariette immediately grasped the truth. Her head swam; her vision became dazzled, she gasped, and, without uttering moan or shriek, sank powerless on the floor.

"Jesus, Mary an Joseph, I lave her undher your protection," pleaded Betty, as seizing an earthen pitcher, she sped like a flash to the stream. Gently and rapidly the cooling application brought Mariette back to her senses, and upon realizing anew the extent of her misfortune—

"Do not tell this to Raphael," she murmured, "for if he imagined that I was grieved, he also would die."

Betty was pleased to hear this, as it gave her to understand that Raphael Russell regarded the happiness of his wife as the dearest interest of his heart.

At twelve o'clock Raphael came home. A weary, languid expression was on his pallid countenance, and his breathing was labored and short. Going up to Mariette, he silently kissed her, and smiled a feeble smile.

"That ceremony could well be dispensed with, Raphael, especially in the presence of company," and Mariette cast her beaming eye towards Betty, who was most busily occupied in culinary preparations.

Russell's look of blank astonishment defies description, but recovering himself somewhat, he haughtily bade her welcome. Betty felt matronly on this eventful occasion, and turning towards him, she half laughingly exclaimed:

"Ah! you rogue, you stole me little nightingale, did n't you, an you left me alone to mourn and complain to the winds."

Russell scowled, but Mariette hastened to make some merry observation, and after some skillful maneuvering, she succeeded in inducing him to sing a duett with her.

"So far so good," soliloquized Betty, as she lay that night on her lonely bed of leaves. "I will stay wid thim, the poor young, heedless craythures, for how kin *she*, who never wet her fingers but to wash them, do the clanin an work of the house? Och! but twas the mad, mad step intirely! Howsumever, we can't put ould heads on young shoulders—tis an ould say and a thrue say, an the ould sayins can never be contradicted. He's a black bodaugh for all," she continued,

rather bitterly; "How scornfully he looked at meself! Twould be jest servin 'em right an to go back every peg to Mr. Austin's," and her wrath was so far getting the better of her judgment, that she actually made a spring for her clothes—"but there's no use in angerin meself about the whippin-post of a fellow—Mr. Austin read him at a glance—an moreover, he's kind to his craythure of a wife—not but she got advice upon advices, Ochone! Ochone! where would you hear of sich a thransaction as this in ould Ireland. God be wid the past!"

The last reflection filling her mind, she fell into a peaceful sleep.

"I would have been fifty times better pleased if she remained where she was," said Raphael, in a surly tone, in answer to a compliment that Mariette was passing upon Betty. "She comes in on our life of happiness like a dark shadow in a dream. I would not begrudge her a touch of Irish remorse for her very officious intermeddling."

"Raphael you pain me—she is the most faithful and devoted creature in the universe."

"How did she find us out? She must be a witch or a fortuneteller, or both, although I believe in neither, to discover our dwelling when our nearest friends are at a loss to find our tracks."

"How many friends took the trouble of looking for our whereabouts? Ah! Raphael! it must have been Heaven that directed her, and we should receive her as a messenger from above."

"I thought I proved to your satisfaction that there was no Heaven and no God, and yet you are forever hinting at one or the other. I say, confound that old woman, coming here with her prayer-book and her beads."

"Enongh now, Raphael, but at least have some reason on your side. You are aware that paying our weekly washing bill, and our neighbor's daughter for cleaning, cooking, etc., with some other necessary expenses, has frightfully lessened our purse. I was really beginning to despair at the prospect of having to do every turn myself. Of course I have a heap of useless jewelry, but it would bring absolutely nothing in these woods. Betty Cary, good and generous soul, will do the work, and bear me company while you are in the fields. I used to feel so desolately lonesome; Raphael, you must be kind to poor Betty Carey, she is my foster-mother and nurse."

This world-wise view of the matter, reconciled Russell in some measure, to the "intrusion," and disposed him to look with more complacency on the "intruder," when the following morning dawned.

"Come, Betty, I will show you through our little demense," said Mrs. Russell, after the breakfast things were rearranged, "while we stray through the serpentine walks, and inhale the sweet odors of the Autumn, you will tell me all about home, and how my poor, poor grandfather died;" tears came opportunely to her relief as she spoke of the beloved departed.

In truth it was a beautiful day. The fleecy, gold-spangled clouds that linger in the Heavens when the garbage of the forest is fading, were scattered in magnificent profusion around the pathway of the sun. The leaves of the trees fell in yellow showers around them, and Betty could not help admitting, as she listened to the tuneful breeze rustling through the defoliated boughs, that it was really a fairy spot in which to spend a life. The space immediately surrounding the cabin, was cleared and cultivated. Mariette delighted in botany, and now a choice partarre it was that boasted of her superintendence. They roamed for some time through the dense woods, alternatively listener and speaker, until a lag came in the conversation, when Betty ventured to interrogate:

"An where is the Catholic Chapel, at all, at all? Shure its meself that have been lookin for it ever since I planted me foot in the glin."

"The nearest place of worship is five miles distant, and that is a Methodist Church."

This was delivered in a tone so superciliously careless, that Betty could neither repress an involuntary shudder, nor smother an exclamation of alarm.

"An tell me," she suddenly exclaimed, "how you manage thin to go to mass?"

"If the truth must be told, I do not go at all. I never was a hypocrite—and now you know my mind."

Words are insufficient to describe the emotions of Mariette's faithful attendant. She dropped on her knees and uttered a vehement and imploring prayer in the Irish vernacular, weeping like a very child.

"I can not stay wid you thin, allanna; I can not give up my Maker, even for the sake of you, who are the very pic-

ture of me little angel, Maureen. O, how can yez have pace or quiet in sich a state as this? Ah! me coleen bawn do n't call down the vingince of Heaven on yer poor head. Its aisier for the craythure to forget God awhile, thin for God to forget the craythure. Do n't turn from me now, but listen to yer conscience, arragal, an rimimber the slippery steps that you are now standin on."

"The Catholic Chapel, they tell me, is ten miles beyond yonder forest; perhaps we could continue to send you every Sunday to mass."

"An would n't you come wid me, mavoorneen."

"Raphael would never consent to it; and the Bible expressly declares that wives should obey their husbands."

Betty thought her foster-child was very far gone for so short a period; the labor of years, was overthrown in as many months, by the wily reasonings of the atheist. Although a poor and friendless Irishwoman, she also had read her Bible, so pointing to Heaven with her withered fingers:

"He that lives up there in glory, Miss Ettie," she answered, "howlding deluges in the hollow of his hand, and orthering the thunder and lightning, has declared that—'He that loves father or mother, husband or brother, more thin me, is not worthy of me'—and elsewhere—'Rimimber thou keep holy the Sabbath day.'"

"You surely must be a blood relation to the immortal Curran, Betty," answered Mariette, with a pretended laugh. "The eloquence of O'Connell is boiling in your veins. You shall not leave us, however, till I give you leave of absence. To-day is Wednesday—we will have time to arrange about Mass before Sunday next."

They retraced their steps towards the cottage. Mariette tried to appear at ease, and wished to rally the despondent Betty, but it was evident from her expression and manner, that remorse was gnawing at her heart. For the remainder of the day she was reserved and silent, and when they had retired for the night, Betty thought that she heard the voices of husband and wife, rise in angry altercation.

When Mrs. Russell first retired to her woodland dwelling, her life seemed like an unclouded day. Raphael's passionate love filled her erring heart; it appeared that all their wild dreams were about to be fully realized. With sorrow we are constrained to acknowledge, that she entirely forgot her God during the weeks of the honeymoon, and when a returning

sense of duty prompted her to seek a reconciliation with her Creator, Raphael put forth such specious objections and obstacles, that she listened and stumbled and fell. But did not remorse annoy her in her moments of reflection? Yes—till Raphael smiled or dallied, when her resolutions evaporated in smoke. Often when alone, sunny memories of other times, would darken her meditative mind, and she would wish to spend her school-days over again, and have such friends as Sister Angelique, Ella Grosvenor, and Mary Kensella; she would like to pray with her former fervor; to confide in the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and to love Jesus above all—but that dark eye, that thrilling voice, that pale face, banished the thoughts of repentance, and again she endeavored, with feverish eagerness, to bury the remembrance of the past.

One chilly day towards the close of October, Mariette sat her down to the piano. An immense log of timber burned in the ample hearth. The leaves were strewn thickly around the cottage premises, and Betty, with her knitting in hand, was abstractedly gazing into the fire. The song that Mariette had selected for execution, was exceedingly plaintive and entitled the Imprisonment of Maria Antoinette. Whenever she was peculiarly downcast, she chanted this mournful melody, it then possessed a strange fascination for her thoughts. As the sad words fell on the ear of the auditor, her eyes were involuntarily flooded with tears. Just as the last wailing echo was sighing through the apartment, and Mariette was finishing by a dirge-like instrumental air, Raphael entered with a lowering frown, and waited until all was still.

"I thought, dear Mariette," he whispered, in a tone of slight displeasure, "that this was one of the songs you promised me not to sing? Now is my turn; let me tell what I have to say," and he seated himself on the stool that his wife had just vacated.

After a majestic prelude, and two or three magnificent introductory sweeps, Raphael began to sing. The performance was entrancingly triumphant; while Mariette delightedly listened, her despondency faded away, and she regarded, with a fond and rapt devotion, the being who possessed such unlimited influence over her mind.

"Raphael," she said, when he concluded, "I do not remember having heard those verses before. They were doubt-

less composed by yourself on the spur of the moment; will you repeat them for me that I may judge of their worth?"

"Most assuredly," he responded; and without further parley he recited the following lines:

MY BEAUTIFUL, MY OWN.

When soft and glimmering little worlds of light were in the sky,
And Luna, fair, with silvery silk, was lining clouds on high;
When, like a belt of diamond beads, appeared night's glittering zone,
'Twas in that gentle hour, I won my beautiful, my own.

Oh! she is fair as morning rising from the golden east;
With envy might a Venus, bright, upon her beauty feast;
Her voice is like the nightingale's, herself a dove unflown,
And I have won a prize in thee, my beautiful, my own!

Her heart a mine of crystal ore, revealed its light to me,—
More guileless than an infant babe, more innocent is she;
A rose she is, a lily, a sunbeam to my home,
A sweet and peerless blossom, is my beautiful, my own.

She warbles songs of happiness—she smoothes my troubled brow,
My heart and its affections fierce, are in her keeping now;
More blessedly contented than a king upon his throne
Am I in the possession of my beautiful, my own!

"Than a king upon his throne," repeated Mariette, dreamily. "Ah! Raphael that reminds me of poor Louis XVI. and"—

Raphael perceived that she was about to make some melancholy reflections, and advancing towards her, he gently took her hand, and led her out into the leafless woods. Betty was partially astonished. Russell noticed her no more than if she had been hundreds of miles away.

"He knows," she soliloquized, "that I am a waking up the good ould thoughts in her conscience, and he, the villian, is down on me fur it! He wants to have her all his own way, an fur all the world like himself, and she the craythur is so very wake, an so mighty willin to plaise, that I hav'n't the laste suspision but she'd be willin to follow him to —— anywhere, if I was n't to the fore. Shure he was mad as the riddle, the Crass o' Christ betune uz an sin an harm, when I axed him to lave her go to Mass on Sunday last, his face got as black as bull's beef, but, av coorse, when she seconded me, he could n't refuse. It was jest as if the Lord ordhered the identical sarmint—all about holy perseverance an listinin to the voice of seduction. Och, thin, may God have that same priest in his keepin, whosomever he may be, this

day," and after this last observation, she set about her knitting with redoubled zeal.

"Mariette," said Raphael, as they walked through the decaying forest, "do send that vexatious old woman away. She will destroy your peace, and make that gloom, of which you were so happily getting rid, return with destructive strength. We were just beginning to experience the sweets of life, when she came down on our enviable retirement."

At such times as this, it would seem as if Mariette had no will of her own. His music still sounded in her ears, and he was well aware that now was the favorable moment to secure her assent to his request.

"Ah! Raphael," she hesitatingly murmured, "how could I manage without her? You know I am extremely awkward, and when you are absent, the hours appear like years."

"Mariette, be reasonable, look at the mischief this Betty has already done! Your interior is in a perfect tumult, your mind is like a wreck."

"In case she left us she would go directly to my father's house, and probably then we would have to accommodate more visitors than one, in our woodland home."

"Do not deceive yourself, my dear, your father will not busy himself about us, and Betty can only inform him that we are happy in the extreme. How could you be lonely with your piano, and the books I have procured? Besides the weather will soon break, and I will necessarily have to stay inside. Take my advice, dearest Mariette, and send Mrs. Carey adrift."

"Raphael! Raphael! I could never broach the subject to her, my dear, my faithful nurse."

Raphael inwardly and outwardly exulted. He averred that she was the model of a wife, and, as for the part of the speaker, trust that to him. He saw in the prospective, the subversion of her religious sentiments, and he exulted! Strange that the heart of man could be so depraved! Strange that he should wish to pluck the remnant of all that was bright and beautiful, out of the human soul! Strange that he could desire the helpless and confiding to share the miseries of his own unhappy lot!

"Let us return, Mariette," said Raphael, "I would have her depart before the winter sets in."

A short and ill-contested struggle reigned in Mariette's

bosom; ere she consented to relax her hold on the only plank that promised to guide her to salvation.

"May I have a word in private with Mrs. Carey," demanded Raphael, when he reached the industrious knitter. Mariette's heart smote her, and she turned away to conceal the intrusive tear. Betty quietly and quickly followed her interrogater outside the cabin door.

"What may be yer will o' me?" she inquired in a doubtful tone.

"Very unpleasant intelligence," he responded, "but it must be told. You understand, Mrs. Carey, we can not always consult our inclination."

"Thrue for you, avick, but we can generally folly them,"

"The winter is breaking; we are young housekeepers, Mariette and I, and have no great stock of provisions to insure us against want. It is a very mercenary motive, I confess—but Mrs. Carey has a discerning mind."

"Don't be aiten yer words, mebouchal, but spake yer mind like a man," said Betty with a flash of spirit, "say at wanst that yez want me to lave yez, an don't be baiten about the bush. Very well—but what does the coleen think? Have she agreed wid you?"

Necessity has compelled her to adopt my opinion, but she is sorry to the heart."

"The good ould sayin, 'enough for two, enough for three,' does n't hould good in this section of the counthry. But no matther! Betty Carey was never yet in want of a bite or a sup, the Lord be praised, an she never before inthered where the welcome was withdrew. I'll be for the road in the mornin."

"Do not hurry yourself in the least, Mrs. Carey—there is no necessity for such haste."

"The sooner I'm off the betther. I'm not one of those that says one thing an thinks another, whatever others may do."

Betty's pride was wounded—she was stung to the very quick.

"Forgive me if I have wounded your——I——"

"No apologies, av you plaise, we undherstand one another. You will lade me to the skirt of the woods tomorrow, an for the present this is enough."

"Mariette was weeping in the little chamber when the twain re-entered. Betty, immediately attracted by her sobs,

rushed in to console her, generously unmindful of the indignity so lately thrust upon her sensitive nature.

"Arrah whist, mavourneen," she whispered; "shure, I knows you ain't in fault. If I'd stay, you'd niver have a minit's quietness, seein that he's so anxious to get red of me, whose sarvices he undherrates. You'll promise me, darlint, to go to Mass every fortnight—won't you, before I go?"

"If I can," faltered Mariette, "and oh, speak well of me to my parents, when you arrive at home. Tell them to forgive me, to think of me with compassion; and you, Betty, you must visit my grandfather's grave, and weep over it for me."

"Dhry yer eyes, acushla machree, and let us be cheerful before parting. Come out into the other room, an don't purtend anything to himself."

The remainder of the day was employed by Betty, in consoling Mariette, and in packing into a handkerchief, her few articles of wearing apparel. Early on the following morning, Raphael was ready to escort her to the border of the forest, and after a sorrowful adieu to her foster-child, she accompanied him with a heavy heart. It was noon before Raphael returned, and as he was jaded and exhausted, he requested his wife to delay the dinner beyond the appointed hour, while he would go and endeavor to take a little nap. What was his surprise, however, to discover on the bed a purse well filled with gold pieces! He showed it to Mariette, who instantly recognized it as Betty's, and at the same moment perceived her benevolent intention. "This is the second purse she has given us," said Mariette; "may she never know what it is to want."

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAVELS AND INCIDENTS.

Mark the young moonlight, silver-like, reposing
On the glad billows murm'ring in their glee;
And now they part, their shining depths disclosing
The mirrored beauties of the "upper sea."
* * * * *
The wild simoon, with its scorching breath,
O'er your garden-plot has speeded,
And a desert waste of ruin, death,
To the peaceful vale succeeded.

"Really, Ella, you are exceedingly provoking," simpered Mary Kensella, one evening in windy March, as they sat conversing in an eastern room of Grosvenor Mansion; your vagaries ought to be of a less serious character."

"No doubt my judicious counsellor would have me believe so; but, most profound of reasoners, the wise man warns us to look before we leap."

"Well, when properly applied," answered Mary; "but look at the mischief your are doing to my humble self! If you wantonly postpone your marriage five or six months longer, do you imagine that you will have Mary Kensella for a bridesmaid?"

"In all conscientiousness, yes;" was the innocent reply.

"Here is poor Richard, returned from across the water, daily spending his eloquence on you in vain; here is your father, jealously speculating on your chances of becoming a nun; here are dozens of devoted friends, anxious for a taste of the wedding-cake, and here, last, though not least, is myself, impatient to witness the consummation of your happiness, and to enter into the enjoyment of my own."

"Now, Mary, suppose I appoint a day three months hence? Wouldn't that suit you exactly, and put an end to all further complaints? Anyhow, you would never dream of leaving us before the close of the beautiful spring."

"Let me see—June—well, I suppose I must submit. It is a pleasant time for traveling—propitious gales, etc., to waft us o'er the seas."

When Rivali came back from Paris, he gave cheering information of Arthur. He passed triumphantly through a

scathing examination, and, by his gentlemanly deportment and suavity of manners, had irresistibly prepossessed both students and professors in his favor. The father was flattered to hear these glorious tidings; Mary Kensella was delighted, and Ella was well nigh beside herself with joy. Richard urgently renewed his importunities; but Ella, in the exuberance of her pleasure, put off her unhappy lover for another half a year. It was this untoward deferment that called forth the above rebukes of her companion, who prevailed upon her at length to shorten the period of her sentence.

The wedding passed off like the generality of all such weddings. The beauty, gallantry and literati of the city and environs found their way to Grosvenor Hall, and a thousand bright lips and manly voices murmured the praises of the bride. Richard moved like a very autocrat among the assembled concourse, a delighted and patronizing smile hiding itself in the curves of his well formed mouth. He was prouder of his beautiful conquest than was the Macedonian hero when the East opened her portals and Greece acknowledged herself his slave. Ella's commanding figure, graceful affability and sweetly dignified condescension, was the whispered theme of all. And she merited the gratuitous compliments so unhesitatingly bestowed. A splendid and costly garment of white brocade unostentatiously displayed her tall but symmetrical proportions. Then her long black ringlets swept down in shining profusion over her covered shoulders; her large hazel eyes, of a naturally melancholy expression, were flooded with affection's mellow light, and her usually fair complexion was now of a roseate tinge. An embroidered blonde veil was fastened on her head by a wreath of delicate moss roses, and a cluster of red and silver blossoms was placed on her heaving breast. Mary Kensella was habited in a similar fashion, but not one-third as magnificently. Mr. Kensella jostled among the spectators with an air of supreme exultation. He congregated together those who were willing to listen to his recital, and told them in confidence, all he knew about Ella's infant life. She was ever his little prime favorite, and (the deepest attention requested) he was her first accepted love! Not content with imparting this direful secret to the unconcerned, he seized an unlucky moment to poison Rivali's cup of happiness by revealing the same to him.

"The majesty of the law is offended," said the bride-

groom, laughingly; "I shall have to take proceedings against you for this."

"To-morrow, if you choose, you piratical knave," replied the old gentleman, good-naturedly, as he dived into another group to disseminate the scandalous tale.

Mr. Grosvenor, on this auspicious occasion, conducted himself like a king. His eagle eye beamed proudly, and his step, martial in its stateliness, became elastic on this day. He silently regretted Arthur's fate and absence, but no one would judge so by his face. Every quarter of an hour, Ella was by his side, relating, with innocent gusto, the goods things that she happened to hear.

When the guests had departed, Mr. Grosvenor, the bride and bridegroom, Mr. Kensella and his daughter, sat them down in a private drawing-room to discuss their future schemes.

"I will have to break up house-keeping for a couple of years at least," suggested the proprietor of the Hall: "your appetite for traveling will not be sooner satisfied; Louis must not be recalled from school, and I will be left in my declining years with nothing but the memory of the past."

"My wife and I have concocted an excellent stratagem," said Mr. Kensella, placidly stroking his beard; "Mary is so anxious to leave her father and mother, that she insists on starting in two or three days. We will paddle over the terrific Atlantic in a steamer, and the calculation is that I am to be back before the expiration of the present month. These young corsairs will remain quietly at home till then, and you must come to our house and take up your lodgings with us."

The three juniors simultaneously cheered this proposition; Mr. Grosvenor was silent.

"Why do you not answer, man alive?" interrogated Mr. Kensella. "Maybe you'd take it into your head to refuse your old friend the last request he'll make on this side of the grave, that is, in all probability."

"And the first on the other, may we not hope?" and Mr. Grosvenor smiled peculiarly. Well, to show you how highly I esteem the invitation, I promise to think of it seriously."

But this promise was not enough for the young cousins; a hot discussion ensued, and it was finally settled that Mr. Grosvenor should accede to the proposal of his friend.

The desire of Mary Kensella's pure soul was satisfied. She gave herself, in the bloom of her youth, while life was

bright, and the future smiling, entirely to her God, and, far from the home of her parents, away from her nearest friends, sought her salvation in a foreign land, unhonored save for her virtues, and unknown but for her kindness of heart, and the sweetness of her disposition. Her gentle mother sorrowed, and her father grieved; still the sacrifice was cheerfully offered, for the sake of that Jesus who suffered on Calvary for our sins.

"We will take a cursory view of our native country first, dearest Ella," answered Rivali, to a question of his wife's, as to whither they should direct their steps. Mr. Kensella had returned from Europe; it was high time, they concluded, to begin to think of a start. "We will spend the remainder of the summer in the Union, between the Lakes, Springs, Caves, Niagaras, Hudsons, Mississippis, forests and aborigines. The ensuing autumn will find us in Erin, Britain, Scotia, and sunny France; and in winter, the genial clime of Italy, will shield us from untempered blasts."

"Have you finished?" asked Ella, laughingly; "surely, if we glide through all these places, we will scarcely have time to breathe, and as to quiet, humble prayer, I suppose it must be dispensed with till our return. What says Richard Rivali to this?"

"That Ella Rivali has a pretty way of her own for erecting imaginary difficulties;" and then he gave her a lucid description of the mode of conveyance he meant to employ, depicting in glowing colors, the abundance of time they would have to perform their devotions, admire the scenery, and keep watch with the stars of night, if such vigils were desirable. By main force of eloquence, Ella was convinced that they *could* visit the countries designated in the period proposed.

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"Poor, suffering Ireland," said Ella to her husband a few days after their arrival on its shores; "I some times imagined the accounts that reached us of its destitution exaggerated, but now I see, alas! that the reports were founded on fact. For all they are a bright and contented-looking people."

They saw Cork and liked it, agreeing among themselves that it was a beautiful and ancient-visaged city. They walked among the ruins of the castles in its vicinity, and one evening, while leisurely straying along the picturesque strand of

Black Rock, at a sudden turning, they surprised a pale-featured, meditative young man, whose eye was resting vacantly on the receding ocean waves. His elbow leant on his knee, and his hand supported his forehead. He started on perceiving the strangers, but made a polite inclination. Richard asked him several questions, and was rather astonished at the prompt and polished answers he received. They fell into a conversation, and were not long in discovering that he was an enthusiast, who in secret fed the fires of nationality in the bosoms of his down-trodden countrymen. He saw with intense delight, that the two Americans were sympathisers; then his wild eyes flashed, and his veins swelled out, and his strong voice quivered, as he told of his people's wrongs. "But they do not suffer in vain," he exclaimed, seizing Ravali's willing hand; "the blood and sighs of the Irish, do not reach the feet of an omnipotent God in vain! No! No!" he continued, grinding his teeth, and stamping his foot vehemently. "No, not in vain. Ancient Rome had her martyrs; the flower of young Christianity fell 'neath the barbarian's sword; the streets of the seven-hilled city were crimsoned with the neophyte's gore, and the haughty 'Niobe of Nations,' seated on her blood-red throne, exulted over the premature grave, as she styled it, of the last of the followers of Christ. But were her mad rejoicings and pompous boastings, permitted to remain unpunished? No! God looked down from the eminence of his power and majesty, and laughed in scorn at the weak, defiant thing; he hurled a thunderbolt of vengeance—mercy it proved; heathen Rome buried herself in humiliation and sackcloth, and Christian Rome rose upon her ruins, bright, and beautiful, and fair. And so will it be with Ireland. When her starved and murdered have gone home to Heaven; when her empurpled soil has reached its saturation-point; when the cries of her injured innocents have been turned into songs of joy in the realms of glory, *then* will be God's day of retribution; *then* will he look down commiseratingly from His Christ-supported throne, and array Ireland, bleeding, holy Ireland, in the beauty of a merited resurrection; then will the oak-hearted, iron-gloved England, shake to her center with terror, and the Emerald Gem of the Ocean will be wrested from her unhallowed, unanointed crown."

There was a painful intensity of feeling in his manner, and expression, as he gave vent to these burning hopes of a

restoration. Ella listened with moistened eye to his eloquent anticipations, and Richard heartily indorsed his views, but, of course, could not conscientiously encourage them. Not because they were not intrinsically perfect, but because he clearly saw that their completion would be dated many years out in the dim futurity. He accompanied them along the beach, till the sun went down into the waters, when, bidding them a sorrowful adieu, he bent his steps towards home.

Leaving Cork, the travelers proceeded to Dublin. They spent an hour in examining its famous Four Courts, and heard Mass in its superb Cathedral. Then the Giant's Causeway was to be seen. Nature made Erin a royal present, when she planted these columns in her sea. Ella thought so, and Richard's opinion coincided with hers.

"Caledonia, stern and wild," corresponded to their preconceived ideas. England they found like a mermaid, half beautiful, half foul. Aristocratic palaces and plebeian huts of the meanest description, mortified their republican sight. "No golden mine in England," said Rivali; "let us hie to the sunny plains of France." Could Ella, when there, resist the temptation of stepping across to Belgium and visiting her beloved Namur? No! but first she would see the gay capital and have an interview with her brother Arthur. Both these designs being compassed, she flew thither on the wings of impatient longing. She beheld again her valued teacher, Sister Angelique, the benignant Superior-General, all her esteemed tutoresses, and among the rest Mary Kensella. In Ella's estimation these fleeting moments were worth a life-time of pleasure: she visited every familiar nook, and wept on each spot consecrated by olden memories. Some of her former classmates were yet in the Institution, and she was not slow to recognize Theresa, who, with a pompous strut, paraded up and down, till satisfied that she attracted attention.

"The winter is rushing on apace, Ella," said Richard, suggestingly, for he perceived that his wife was attached to the Convent in Namur; "what think you of seeking shelter under Italian skies? Florence, Rome or Naples—which of the flowers do you choose?"

"Rome, most decidedly; but Richard, can we not remain yet a little longer here?"

"Not more than a day or two, for roaming about in this dangerous vicinity might estrange a little heart from one who is too proud and too jealous of its possession.

They were in the seven-hilled city towards the beginning of December.

"To-morrow, Richard, we must visit a few of the lazarettos. Oh! what a truly great vocation the Sister of Charity has! She stands by the bed of the sick and dying outcast; she wipes the cold perspiration from his suffering brow, raising his struggling heart to Heaven and pouring the oil of religious consolation into his suffering soul. Oh! what a noble vocation!"

Rivali looked upon the beautiful and now excited Ella with feelings of the deepest respect; reverent thankfulness was in his azure eyes, and echoing the words, "Oh! what a noble vocation," he handed her to a chair and seated himself beside her.

Ella's heart was a fountain of commiseration. It awakened her tenderest sympathies to behold an afflicted fellow being; and sights of woe and disease, far from disgusting her or destroying the equilibrium of her nerves, only made her grateful to Heaven for the benefits conferred on herself, and more fervent in her appeals for the amelioration of the distresses of the poor.

A singularly prepossessing Sister was appointed to show them through the lazaretto. She appeared so gentle, modest, and obliging, that the travelers were veritably charmed. She answered their numerous questions with a graceful affability, and told the stories of many of the sufferers so affectingly that Ella could not choose but weep.

"Step lightly now," whispered the Sister to her auditors, "for we are approaching the pallet of death. Breathe softly —the sufferer sleeps. It is well—he has not known rest for many an hour before."

These remarks brought them to the couch of an uneasy slumberer. They could not see the features, for he faced the wall, and the matted black hair, fell over his temples and cheeks. The Sister knelt down to offer an Ave for her patient, and her companions followed her example, but scarcely was their short aspirations completed, than he turned on his side, opened his black, appealing eyes, and uttered an almost inaudible moan. The Sister imagining that a soothing drink would refresh the sick man, immediately vanished for a sedative. Mrs. Rivali grew pale as her gaze alighted on the invalid's countenance: she leaned heavily on her husband's arm, and he, supposing that a sudden illness had come

upon her, was hastening with her from the room, when,—"Richard, dearest Richard," she hoarsely whispered, "permit me to stay—it was only a momentary weakness."

Emotions were also observed to stir the awakened sleeper. A phosphoric light blazed from his jetty eyes, as half starting up, he beckoned Ella Rivali towards him.

"You were on board the 'Sea Eagle,'" he said, "some five or six years ago."

"I was," Ella tremulously replied.

He cautiously slipped his hand under his pillow, and thence drew forth a box of curious workmanship. Deliberately he applied his finger to a secret spring: the lid flew open, and drawing forth a neat, white paper, he carefully unfolded it, and a little golden ringlet revealed itself to view.

"Do you recognize this curl?" he demanded.

Ella answered—"Yes."

"Then you remember the little Alphonsus?"

"I do."

"And how he suffered, and how he died, and how his parents grieved?"

"All."

"You recognize me?"

"I knew you instantly."

He regarded her a moment longer, heaved a deep-drawn sigh, and turned away from observing and observers, till the Sister returned with the draught.

Slowly he sipped the mild beverage, and experiencing its strengthening effects, again he called Ella to his side.

"You, it was," he faltered, "who closed the eyes of Alphonsus when the heart-broken mother was unable to perform the sad rite: it was you who cut off the tresses to give them to the bereaved parents."

Ella was about to inform him that the merit of the action belonged to Mariette, but he impatiently motioned her to keep silence, continuing meanwhile: "It was a calm day, I think, that they buried the boy in the waters, and when the rude coffin sailed a while on the waves, I know that you wept over the little innocent's fate. Say," he added, regarding her compassionately, "would you listen to the story of my life?"

The Sister approached, and noticing his wild excitement, gently requested him to keep quiet for the remainder of the evening.

"To-morrow," she said, you may relate your history, if you will; but now you are too weak—you would absolutely injure yourself."

"Come, then, to-morrow," he faintly whispered, "and I will tell you my tale, for you loved Alphonsus, and was kind to his disconsolate mother."

This incident so astounded Ella that she was speechless for a moment. Upon the inquiry of the Sister, as to whether she would visit any other apartments:—

"Not to-day," she responded, "I have already seen enough."

She informed Rivali, that night, of the manner in which she had become acquainted with the stranger; of his inexplicable singularity of conduct; "And often, since then," she added, "have my feminine thoughts been employed in endeavoring to unravel the mystery that enveloped himself and his affairs. And now suspense will be honorably terminated in an almost supernatural way."

CHAPTER XIX.

A REVELATION.

Requiem Æternam! the solemn scene is ended,
Folded in its mother earth, the lifeless corpse, alone;
All the thoughtful throng dispersed, each his way has wended,
Sorrowed to his bosom's core, anguished, to his home.

Requiem Æternam! light and rest eternal
Give to those that "sleep the sleep that knows no waking," Lord;
Let them taste of endless joy in Thy haunts so vernal,
For they loved Thy Sacred Law, and kept Thy Holy Word.

The sun was rising over the city of the Seven Hills—the proud, the ancient city. Richard and Ella saw St. Peter's Cathedral tower, in its kingly glory, above all the buildings in Rome: they saw a hundred tapering spires shroud themselves in the morning mists, and the magnificent remnants of pagan antiquity around, and in the distance. Taking a retrospective glance of twenty-six hundred years, they beheld the mud-encompassed village of Romulus—the flourishing Kingdom of Numa Pompilius—the Empire under

[redacted]stus—the home of the twelve Cæsars—the fostering mother of genius in science, art and war—that was a glorious picture alternating light with shade—but now they saw that ancient country converted into the sheep-fold of Jesus; there was the residence of His chosen representative—the field of labor for myriads of disinterested souls. Many thoughts of the past and future rose to the reflective minds of the Americans, and the sun had run his course some hours in the heavens before they prepared to revisit the father of Alphonsus.

They found him weak and exhausted, but calm, and in a communicative mood.

"Seat yourselves close to my pillow," he directed, "and listen attentively, for I can not speak very loud. Let my story be a warning, and, while ye listen to my sins and temptations, do not condemn too hastily the erring, but, with the grace of God, repentant prodigal child. Lady," he somewhat suddenly demanded, "I suppose that this is your husband."

Ella answered in the affirmative.

"And you are both Catholics."

"By the grace of God we are."

"Then, I trust, you will understand my meaning: A third of a century ago, in an Andalusian valley, a house of some pretensions rose amid the foliage of shrubbery and trees. A garden of surpassing loveliness encompassed that dwelling of plenty. Fountains flung high their crystal jets, and little birds constructed their downy nests in the branches of the orange and pomegranate. Statues of the Virgin and the Child were placed at intervals in the most conspicuous situations. Every thing betokened the reign of plenty, peace and love. The proprietor of the mansion was a sincerely pious gentleman, blessed with a numerous family, and anxious to instruct them all in the way of salvation and truth. Among the rest, one gave more than ordinary indications of a superior intellect. Upon this discovery the pious parents immediately resolved to consecrate him to the service of religion. And he delighted to decorate the shrines of the Immaculate Mary and her Infant Son with the rarest and most exquisite flowers, and nothing afforded him greater pleasure than to serve at the daily Masses in the village, which was not far off. He was kept at ordinary school-boy duties till the commencement of his thirteenth

year, when, after standing a victorious examination, his father dispatched him to the University of Salamanca, so widely and so deservedly renowned. Without pride I may allege that he was looked upon as a model for his school-fellows. Assiduously diligent, promptly obedient, and undeniably devout, he merited the warmest approbation of his superiors; and the hearts of his parents beat with parental happiness when they received these glowing accounts, and, blessing the Lord, they hourly exulted in the innocent pride of their souls.

"Things continued thus satisfactory till the student was about entering the last year of his theological course. A general debility that threatened to terminate in rapid consumption, compelled him to leave off his studies, and give relaxation to his mind, and moderate exercise to his body. Constant and close application had imparted the hue of death to his once clear olive complexion, and his eye wore a dreamy and dispirited look. Traveling was prescribed as the speediest curative; novelty and change of air being considered as powerful auxiliaries. And the youth left the Alma Mater of his boyhood to return home, prior to beginning a pilgrimage that so disastrously ended."

The speaker's enunciation had been uniformly slow, but now his voice became perfectly indistinct. Rivali noticing it, gently intimated that they would be at his disposal on the morrow, as the effort to continue was, at present, evidently too great.

The sick man looked his thanks, as clasping Rivali's hand between his attenuated fingers:

"May you never know the pangs of a broken heart," he earnestly exclaimed, "nor the stinging, sometimes nearly hopeless, sorrow of the penitent."

"Do not say nearly hopeless," said Ella, with the deepest emotion, "for there is a bright hope for the penitent beyond the tomb. Jesus died for the sinner—God will forget and forgive."

The sufferer regarded her for a moment with a placid smile, then closed his eyes and bowed his head as if to sleep.

On the afternoon of that same day they stood in the Christian Rotunda. Faintly, through the immense and solitary window in the ceiling, crept the feeble rays of a December sun. Oh! the mystical feeling that stole over the

lowly worshipers as they thought of the reverses that had marked the course of that glorious temple!

"Thou veteran structure!" exclaimed Ella, as they walked along the magnificent portico, "two thousand, less than two thousand years ago, hundreds of awe-stricken adorers acknowledged the power of the heathen Avenger under thine ample roof. Speaking chronometer of the times that were, well it is that the true God is worshiped under thy covert now—well it is that thou makest reparation to the injured majesty of the Eternal and Supreme."

"My thoughts are an echo of yours, Ella," said Richard, in a softened tone. "If the Pantheon were not consecrated by the successors of St. Peter to perform its present sacred functions, we would, in all probability, be gazing on its utter wreck. Ay, it is a noble attestor of the magnificence of Rome when she bowed to the will of her first great Emperor, and the son-in-law of Augustus was merely an instrument in the hands of Providence when he planned and erected this pile."

"Ah! me," continued Ella, "language fails, and thought melts into chaos, as I look upon this grand Rotunda. Only a feeling of insignificance remains; I comprehend what a miserable atom I am in the midst of God's beautiful creation, and in sight of man's wonderful works."

They minutely examined the portico of the edifice, its columns and its immense, round bulk. It not only equalled the ideal their imaginations had pictured, but actually surpassed the finest of their fancy sketchings. A gloom pervaded the interior of the building, for it was a dark and showery day, they thought, to live in an Italian clime, and they took their homeward march to the musical sound of a continuously drizzling rain.

Soon they were peacefully enscounced in their comfortable apartments. A cheerful fire sent its thin blue columns of smoke out into the foggy air; the pattering rain-drops beat moodily against the window-panes, and as Richard and Ella sat dreamily side by side, a sudden inspiration seemed to flash upon the former's mind. Abruptly springing from his seat, he sought his favorite guitar, and, smiling mischievously at Ella, struck a few preliminary chords, wondering, meanwhile, if she remembered any of the serenading he had given her long ago. While her thoughts were actively engaged in deciphering the ambiguous expression of his countenance,

he again swept his fingers over the reverberating strings and, in his own rich tenor, sang the following premeditated song:

Oh! who could love the cheerless rays
The clouded sun lets fall
Upon the earth on rainy days,
Like silver round a pall?—
'Tis true our fancies wild can make
The rain-drops crystals be—
And we can think the mermaids take
These crystals to the sea.
We may imagine that they grace
With them their ocean cells,
And pass them through their curls, and place
Them bead-like round their shells.
But ah! the sky is always sad,
The sun seen through a haze,—
And I am seldom ever glad
Upon these rains days.

There was something like a twinkle of defiance in Rivali's bright eye, as the last words of his ditty died away in an echo faintly prolonged. Ella persuaded her interior self that she studied the rules of composition and versification for nothing, if she could not respond to the volunteer strain. Acting on this maidenly conviction, she quietly went over to the piano, and litfing the heavy lid, paused an instant to frame a suitable reply. Lightly her fingers sped over the ivory keys, and while Richard was employed in chaotic conjectures, she rather demurely began:

Oh! I can love the misty rays
The trembling sun lets fall
Upon the earth, on rainy days,
Like white fringe round a pall.
But not because the mermaids bear
Our diamonds to the deep,
And on their snowy temples wear
A glittering rainy wreath.
But ah! because the rainy day
Reflections captive take,
And then the voice of conscience may
Its revelations make.
The rainbow in the sky appears
Emerging from the sea;—
The rainy day with all its tears
Has beams of hope for me.

"Capital! upon my honor!" shouted Richard, as Ella in gentle triumph regained her seat. "In simple truth, you have shamed me out of the little self-opinion that I hitherto possessed."

"I fear that of the little some remaineth," she returned, with a winning smile; but I am thinking of the father of

Alphonsus. Oh! the miseries of the world that are hidden from our heedless view."

Tears rose unbidden in her eyes; her bosom heaved; memories were thickening around her, and it required all of Rivali's potent influence, to soothe her agitated mind. He succeeded, for he never failed, and the remainder of the evening was passed in sweet and pleasant conversation. They needed no gay companions to while the hours away—Richard and Ella found sufficient society and earthly happiness in themselves.

"I am dying fast," said the invalid, when, on the following morning they were ushered into his presence. "I can not sojourn much longer in this woeful valley of tears. May God have mercy on me, and may Mary shield me from the wrath of her indignant Son."

"Would it not, perhaps, be too much for you to relate the sequel at present?" demanded Ella compassionately, for she saw that he was weakly, and she feared the effort would occasion pain.

"Fear not, when I feel indisposed, I will have no difficulty in avowing it," and something like a shadow of a smile flitted over his emaciated face, "At what period of my narrative did I discontinue?"

"You were speaking of your departure from the University, and stated that you intended a passing visit home."

"True," the sick man replied, as his imagination seized upon the thread. "My memory is not so retentive as it was wont to be. Hand me that goblet, please."

Ella hastened to comply with the requisition, and after quaffing a refreshing draught, he continued in a tremulous tone:

"My fond and gentle mother, it would appear, had an indefinite foreknowledge of the impending evil. She pressed me to her bosom tenderly and long, and in sweet, impressive language, warned me of the dangers that were likely to beset my path. I parted from my home with bright anticipations, for in truth my fancy was ever rich, and I was to direct my steps to Sicily, the beautiful isle. I always honored its brave inhabitants; I planned the most splendid adventures among its mountain-hights. Etna was the loadstone of my imagination. The sloping hill in its interior—its fertile sides covered with vineyards, and dotted with villages, possessed indescribable charms for my mind. I stood at the foot of

the mountain, and, having my portmanteau well stored with provisions, looked exultingly ahead. Ignoring guides and frequented passes, I shaped my course along a lonesome, unbeaten way. The scenery entranced me; I stopped like a child at every stone and pebble—examining the lava and mold with the curiosity of a well-read geologist. Evening stole on imperceptibly, and with it, a modified sirocco wheeled tempestuously from above, stunning me completety by its sudden rush. When it had passed away, I vainly looked about for a cottage. No habitation to be discovered; the acclivity was steep, and I cast glances about for a trysting. Under the shelter of a stunted tree, I laid me down to sleep. The cold night-wind chilled me, but on the morrow I determined to ascend, for signs of cultivation appeared beyond, and I augured that a dwelling must necessarily be near. Nor was it a mistaken idea. A neat white cottage, trellised with vines, and almost hidden in shrubbery, burst upon my sight. A benevolent elderly-looking matron, responded to my summons, and cordially invited me to refreshment and repose; but noticing my wan countenance and the bewildered expression of my eye, she reproved me mildly, for wandering from the common tracks, and sleeping in the air."

"Which last was unavoidably under existing circumstances," said Ella, filling up a pause of unusual length.

"I was too much exhausted to think of setting out immediately, and in the course of an hour, I exhibited symptoms of a malignant type. My hostess viewed them with alarm, not because she dreaded sickness, or was inexperienced, but I would be compelled to lodge beneath her roof, which she considered was not a fitting residence for one of my apparent rank. But there was no alternative—I was confined to my chamber a month. My constant and vigilant nurse, was the matron's daughter, a prepossessing maiden of nineteen or more. She was assiduous in her attentions, anticipating my slightest wish, and some times singing me to repose. I did not mind her at first. I never thought of her save when she was actually before me, and then only as a kind and obliging nurse. When perfectly restored, I took leave of the family; I was startled to notice a tear in young Isabella's eye. However, I was unconscious of any other feeling than that of gratitude, and I thought the tear excited my pity. Ah! never did a passion steal into the human heart, as noiselessly as did the passion of love into mine. I hummed a

tune betimes, but to my utter astonishment, I would find it to be one of Isabella's simple songs. There was an image in my mind, thin and unsubstantial as a dream.

"When I returned home after two or three months rambling, the first evil symtom that developed itself, was apathy during prayer. The sweet, whole-souled fervor of former days had vanished. In the course of time I dropped my extra devotions, but so gradually that I hardly perceived it myself. Then it was remarked that I grew remiss in my studies. Flinging aside my classical and theological books, I read, first, real Spanish literature, but afterwards romances and tales. This was not done in a day, but so gradual was the transition, that I entertained no serious alarms till I examined my conscience for confession, and even then, the subtle, plausible enemy, would throw his veil over my eyes, and persuade me that my indifferent state of health rendered slight mental dissipation a necessity."

"Deem me not impertinent," interrupted Rivali, "if I ask were you bound by orders to the service of the Church?"

"Ah! there is the touchstone!" he returned, with visible emotion, "I was already deacon, and in my fervent boyhood, had consecrated myself by a vow of chastity to God."

Richard and Ella regarded each other in affright: the narrator was silent for a considerable time.

"The watchful eye of my mother," he at length continued, "perceived the growing change. She advised me sweetly, but I assured her that her scruples were imaginary. She was my guardian angel. Often I missed my poisonous romances, and would accidently discover that my mother had consigned them to the flames. My father was not uneasy about me. I was the pride of his heart—all I performed was perfection. In order to avoid the vigilance of my mother, and satisfy my appetite for fiction, I procured French and English poetry, and thus indulged it without incurring censure. They were making hasty preparations for my return to college, when my mother sickened and died. My grief was unbounded, for I loved her as few sons loved a mother, and often I spent hours of the night sobbing over the earth that covered her dear remains."

Tears gushed into the eyes of the patient, and he did not seek to conceal them. After another draught and a considerable pause, he resumed:

"I told my surviving parent that I would travel again,

He conceded to my desires, and even now I remember his sad face and choked utterance as he bade me adieu. It was the last I saw of my father, and the wild prayer I breathed over my mother's grave, has never been repeated over the same consecrated spot. The tempter took my thoughts to the family in the mountain cottage. Why not go back, he suggested, and renew your expression of thanks? The idea was welcome—the route romantic—but not to enter the details of a trial that charred my soul, I went—I wooed my Isabella; I married her, forgetting God and my vow! It was a terrible deed."

His countenance assumed an intensely painful expression—busy memory was at work.

"When the marriage was consummated, I became the victim of a racking remorse. My bride was alarmed, and innocently attributed my conduct to want of dutifulness on her part. I assured her of the contrary, but I could not remain in a country so near to my native land. We took passage for the United States, where freedom reigned, and where, I was happy to think, no soul would recognize the former cleric. I engaged in mercantile business and succeeded well, but peace was a stranger to my heart. Three babes were born and died in infancy. I acknowledge it was a scourge from God. I confided all to my wife, and her agony was intense. At length Alphonsus was ushered into existence. We forgot our grief in the sweet child's caresses, but without any apparent cause my business rapidly declined. My partner decamped with money, bonds, etc., and I was left nothing but some houses and the stock. Under these circumstances we resolved to leave the country of our adoption. Our boy was entering his fourth summer—our happiness was centered on him. But you know how our flower was blighted on board that fatal ship. When I recovered from the illness consequent on his death, I began to entertain a right idea of my manifold tergiversations. My wife and I agreed to make all the reparation in our power. I was kind to her. I tried to conceal my anguish, for I considered myself bound to render her lot as endurable as I possibly could. But poor Isabella died in France ere two months came to an end. She promised to pray for me in Heaven, and since that period I am wandering like Cain, with the mark of reprobation on my brow."

He closed his eyes, crossed his hands on his bosom and

breathed a few minutes, heavily and loud. Then drawing from under his pillow the box of curious workmanship, he carefully removed Alphonsus's tress, and under it lay a paper folded with the most scrupulous regard.

"Read these lines," he said, handing the paper to Ella; "read them attentively, and you will then understand why Isabella loved them so well. Her voice was soft and touching, but peculiarly so when she sang these words to an exceedingly plaintive air. Those verses and this little lock are all that I value of earth."

Mrs. Rivali began aloud:

FRAGMENTARY.

I'm weary, Jesus, of this life of anguish;
My morn has faded, and my noon is gone—
Night has descended, and I pine and languish
For thee, my Jesus, and the Pilgrim's Home.

I'm weary, Jesus, of this world of sorrow;
I saw my sun rise, and that sun go down—
For me the future hides no radiant morrow,
I am, my Jesus, in my grief alone.

Forgive me, Jesus, if the voice of wailing
Offends or grieves thee, or occasions pain—
But peace has vanished, and hope's star is paling;
So pardon, Jesus, I implore again.

My bosom heaveth, and mine eyes are weeping,
And visions darkly, dimly pass before—
But here, my Jesus, I may not be sleeping;
The struggler sighs for yon receding shore!

O! take me, Jesus, to thy distant dwelling;
My soul is weary of this earthly night—
I would I were among the angels telling
Thy sweetness, Jesus, Heaven's sole delight.

Before me sometimes, misty phantoms gliding,
Reveal a country rich in pearls and gold—
There lilies dwell, and purple buds are hiding,
And crimson blossoms to the eye unfold.

Oh! call me, Jesus, to that fertile valley,
For I am weary of this world of woe—
My sinking spirits, dearest Saviour, rally,
And I am ready, Jesus mine, to go.

After suitable commendations, she returned him the valued "Fragmentary."

"Do you know," inquired the invalid "why I came to die in Rome? I could not go to my Maker with my broken vow, without the papal absolution. Oh! that broken vow! Oh! that lost vocation!"

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"To the Coliseum," directed Rivali, speaking to the postillion; "no delays, and drive as fast as possible."

The carriage stopped; Richard and Ella stood in the center of the Eternal City, and beneath the broken shadow of the wonderful structure that the Emperor Vespasian planned and commenced, and which Titus, the destroyer of Jerusalem, finished and dedicated. The hand of time was laid heavily on the oval Coliseum, and the barbarian had aided him in his ruthless work, till Catholicity, as its champion, came forward. She presented her breast as a shield, to ward off the blows from a building rendered sacred by the blood of her martyred saints.

They entered reverently—the soil was holy soil. By means of the fourteen altars placed around the interior of the structure, they figuratively followed Jesus to the mount of His ignominious Crucifixion, and prayed, oh! how fervently, before the shrine of our Sorrowful Lady. Live on, thou sanctified Coliseum, to remind the future generations of the power of our Emanuel; live on, a perpetual memorial of the direful tragedies that have been enacted under thy roof.

Daily the travelers visited the father of Alphonsus. They saw with unbounded delight, that a tranquil peace had taken possession of his soul, and that at any moment his purified spirit was willing to wing its flight. The much-desired papal absolution had been granted; a zealous clergyman watched almost continually by his pillow; he died, retaining his consciousness to the last, and blessing his gentle nurse, his patient confessor, and his devoted well-wishers, Richard and Ella Rivali. They followed his remains to their last humble resting-place, and several times afterward visited it to pray for the repose of his soul.

"Florence is the cradle of the arts," exclaimed Rivali, joyfully; "I look for golden pleasures in that city, so beautiful and so renowned. Are you not nursing some glorious anticipations, Ella?" he asked, with a genial smile.

"None!" she archly answered, "I have hopelessly forgotton the dates. This luxurious climate, this Italian sky, these southern breezes, and abortive attempts at frost, overturn my chronological ideas entirely. Are we assuredly in January? for in fact I miss the snow visitations, and the biting frosts of our more northern clime."

"It is time to leave, Ella, when matters have come to this. I will be sorry when the gates of Rome close all Rome but

St. Peter's, from my sight; and you? But I need not inquire—you would live forever in Rome."

"Not forever, Richard. There is a city that I love better than Rome on the other side of the grave."

CHAPTER XX.

A HISTORY.

The Rivalis were in Florence. While returning one day from the tomb of the Medicis, that unfinished wonder, more like a fanciful temple of art than a monument for the departed, Ella's attention was arrested by a female who was cautiously treading her way. She was not attired like the natives, and a thick, brown veil effectually covered her features, but there was something in her person and carriage that struck Ella as peculiarly familiar. The wearied though elastic step called up a vague remembrance, an indefinable recollection of somebody she had known. She confided this perplexing little difficulty to her husband, but he laughed at the childish conceit.

"Pooh!" he said, in a voice of raillery; "some artist's wife, hailing from the United States, and hoping to find in Florence, a name and enough to eat. See! she is going into that haberdasher's shop, perhaps to purchase embellishments for herself and her 'other-half.'"

"And does not your heart open when you meet a person from your native land? Let us wait, Richard, at least till she comes out, and then we might discover her abode. If she needs assistance—her habiliments, once fine, are threadbare—we should be happy to have wherewith to relieve her. Do be led by me once, for I have hopes of being of service, and we will proceed very leisurely, so as not to awaken suspicion."

"Your philosophy, dear Ella—neither mental nor natural, but practical—and your philanthropy, are absolutely infectious. I am subdued—I acknowledge myself a disciple of your reform school."

They promenaded slowly, and they stopped, when a reason-

able pretext presented itself, either to admire or to buy. In a few minutes the woman brushed hastily past them. Her veil was more closely drawn, but her step was lighter and freer. They quickened their pace to keep her in view, if possible, but after rounding several corners, a rickety and dilapidated building suddenly opened to receive her, like the enchanted Cave Sesame, that opened at the bandit's word.

A week elapsed, and Ella obtained not a glimpse of the stranger. She had often loitered about that obscure locality for no other purpose than to catch a sight of the occupant of the crumbling house, and now she resolved to dispel all mystery by personally inquiring. Accordingly, she proceeded alone one hazy February morning, and tapping gently at the door, was answered by a burly Florentinian. Perceiving that she had a visitor of ladylike appearance, the woman curtsied low, and respectfully invited her into a room that boasted a few mutilated chairs, a decrepit table, and a solitary window, disfigured by unseemly panes.

"You are mistress of the house," said Ella, in the Italian language.

"Yes, Signora," replied her entertainer, assuming a graceful stand.

"Have you not a foreigner in one of your apartments," she queried, fearing an unfavorable answer, yet hoping for the best.

"Yes, Signora," the obliging woman rejoined, "she comes from a country farther than the Adriatic Gulf and beyond the Mediterranean Sea."

"Could I see her do you think?" demanded Ella, pleased at this evidence of her hostess' geographical tastes.

"Yes, Signora, although she is sick she will not object to a call from a lady, that is, I think she will not."

With this, after divers apologies, she led her up a ruined stairway, which maliciously threatened to give way beneath the united pressure of their feet. On the third landing the guide flung open a door, and pointing Ella in was about to retire, when she marvellously found herself undisputed possessor of a piece of gold.

A scene of misery greeted her vision. A broken sky-light admitted the uncertain beams of a wintry sun, and by their feeble gleaming Mrs. Rivali perceived one chair and an article intended for a table, on which were deposited some pieces of the coarsest delf. The scantily furnished bed was occupied by

a pale and worn woman, who clutched an infant to her breast. No fire burned in the desolate hearth. A sleep troubled by dreams had sealed the lids of the visited. She was pleading for her babe or reasoning aggressors away, for her lips moved rapidly; she held the child convulsively, and sometimes extended her arms as if to protect it from danger. Ella drew the lonely chair close to the edge of the pallet, determined to await the slumberer's waking, but no sooner had her eye alighted on the woman's countenance than a pallor overspread her face. To whom could that auburn hair, that once beautiful but pettish mouth, that full forehead, those marked features belong, to whom but to Mariette Austin! "Ah!" she murmured sorrowfully, "this then is the form I saw, this is the step that was once so buoyant and elastic! this is the cheek that was softer than the peach's down! Oh! Mariette Austin! school-friend, bosom-friend, how has it come to this? The voice that was only the echo of gladness now utters but accents of woe. Mariette Austin, Mariette Austin, how has it come to this!"

While speaking she had fallen on her knees and buried her face in her hands. The name of Mariette Austin, her former name, repeated so mournfully, aroused the sleeper from her rest. Starting from her couch, she looked in wild astonishment upon the richly appareled suppliant, whom she did not recognize, till Ella arose from her prayer, and in an instant after they were clasped in each others' embrace.

"You have found me, Ella Grosvenor, reaping the bitter harvest of my sowing. I would to God we had not met. My friend," said Mariette, in a tone of such rending grief that Ella Rivali wept. "My friend, we are not equals now."

"And because misfortune has overtaken you, will you not therefore acknowledge the companion of your happier days? Mariette, dear Mariette, believe that I am not changed."

"Not you, Ella Grosvenor, not you, but I."

They spoke of former times, and forgetting the present were hurried once again into the past.

"You are doubtless astonished to see me thus reduced, dearest Ella—I will call you as of yore"—said Mariette, trying to put cheerfulness in her tone, "but when you hear my story you will cease to be surprised."

"And who is this little stranger, Mariette, asked Ella, as she dallied with the child, and where did she steal those eyes, the sweet decoyer; they are a very reflection of my own."

"She has her father's eyes, dear Ella, she has Raphael Russell's eyes," and tears gushed into her own, and recent wounds were opened afresh.

"The poor little innocent will perish in this chilling room; but are you too ill, Mariette, to leave your comfortless couch?"

"For five days I have only risen to prepare a morsel of food. I think that helplessness, weakness, and stunning sorrow are my only complaints. When you come back to-morrow, Ella, I will endeavor to be well. Oh! racking tortures gnaw my broken heart."

"Cease, Mariette, cease—these expressions do not become a daughter of our holy Faith. You suffer now, but you will have your reward."

Mariette did not broach the subject of the afflicting circumstances that had brought her so low, and Ella had too much delicacy of feeling to inquire into the particulars of her case. When she was leaving, however, Mariette voluntarily promised to tell her her history on the ensuing day.

Ella was intercepted at the foot of the stairs by the large-limbed, grateful landlady, who instantly commenced pouring out a torrent of thanks. She presented her with money, requesting her to expend it for the comfort of her destitute tenant.

"Provide fuel, victuals, and medical attendance, if necessary," she instructed, "and be kind enough yourself to see that nothing is short."

Mariette was astonished when her hostess began to busy herself about the arrangement of her apartment; more so when a fire blazed in a portable charcoal furnace, and savory viands appeared, and more so still when an eminent physician visited her humble abode.

"Wonderful are the ways of Providence," remarked Ella to her husband on reaching home. "I have discovered the retreat of Mariette Austin."

"Is it possible, Ellie, that she has been hiding, and for what end, if I may inquire?" said Rivali with ill concealed mirth, as he noticed the flushed cheeks and hurried delivery of Ella.

"It is no subject for joking, Richard," she answered, in a ruffled voice, "my dear old acquaintance is in actual distress," and she related all that fell under her observation, not forgetting to moralize soundly on the transitoriness of earthly goods. "Two years ago," she continued, "who would have thought

this of Mariette Austin! She was the gay, flattered, and admired child of fortune; wealth and pleasure strewed her flower-scented path; her smile was fascination—hundreds were in her train—and to-day she is a forsaken stranger in a foreign land. Poor Mariette! this accounts for my unanswered letters—you know Richard, how often I have written and never received a reply."

"Shall I accompany you, Ella, to the house of your distressed companion?" asked Rivali on the following morning, when Ella was preparing to depart.

"Yes, to the house, dear Richard," she answered, "but no farther. It would not be gentlemanly to thrust yourself in upon Mariette Russell, and she happily ignorant that such a giant exists; moreover, I am to learn her history."

Mariette was expecting her friend. Ella could hardly realize that the changed and haggard individual before her, was really the light-hearted, laughing girl of former days. A deep flush mounted to her sallow cheek when Mrs. Rivali entered; she was conscious that she was indebted to her for all that she now enjoyed, and, galling as it was to her sensitive nature, she would have fallen on her knees and thanked her, but for the prompt generosity of Ella, who, perceiving her intention, caught her in her arms, and kissing her, led her to the chair. The babe, a beautiful infant seven or eight months old, was sleeping still, and its thin little hands and face bore evidence to the mother's want.

"Ella Grosvenor," said Mariette, when both were seated before the fire, "time has wrought many changes in the associate of your school-day joys. I have lived to repent the romancing folly of my girlhood, and to see a fond old grandfather numbered among the dead, because his unworthy child forsook him in the evening of his life. I have lived to know that a mother mourns over her erring child, and that my father has severed me from his heart. And friends, too, weep for her that disregarded their affection. Ah! Ella, I have known sorrow, and trouble, and want; the pampered favorite of luxury has needed the necessities of life. What harrowing recollections are connected with the last two years; but tell me, Ellie, of yourself, and of those that I formerly loved."

Commencing with the period of Mariette's visit to the Hall, Ella gave a graphic description of every subsequent event. Her introduction to Father Dominick, conversations

with Mary Kensella, the conversion and vocation of her brother, Mary Kensella's beautiful choice of a state of life and its prompt adoption, how Rivali wooed and won, their trip across the ocean, the father of Alphonsus and his sorowful tale.

"Ah!" murmured Mariette, plaintively, "my history may be heard after his, for we can trace our misfortunes to a nearly similar source. God visited him with temporal chastisements because he disregarded his call and broke a solemn vow; and me he punishes because I disobeyed his commandments and rushed with headlong precipitation into the phantom-gardens of the enemy and listened to his siren voice."

She then related her experiences and trials until the eventful day that she encountered Mrs. Rivali in the street. She told her how she had hurried into pleasure; attended concerts, balls and soirees, led fashion and neglected her duties, but how remorse sometimes would steal in upon her moments of reflection and coil its poisonous fangs, as she chose to consider them, around her upbraiding soul; how she was fascinated by Raphael, their elopement, life in the woods, Mrs. Carey's unexpected visit, and the ungenial reception she received.

"She began the work of reformation within me, Ella, but when she departed I quietly sat under my fetters again. Raphael perceived that a woodland life, after all the beautiful surroundings with which his fancy had embellished it, turned out to be a reality in the end. Ploughing, sowing, reaping, and felling were tested and found eminently distasteful. The least exertion overpowered him, he was so weak and so unused to work; and as the shrill winds of the approaching winter swept gustily through the native forests, he became daily more abstracted, and, as I thought, morose. I passed my time unhappily after the novelty of my situation passed away. I had nobody with whom to communicate except Raphael, and he who had promised to be all in all to me, now was stubbornly silent, sullenly rejecting my attempts to comfort him in his woe. Besides, I had nothing to read except the works of Voltaire in the original, translations of the Italian radicals; Rousseau, Tom Paine, and a number of volumes on Materialism, and all the horribleisms extant. This collection, as you may well suppose, I most contemptuously eschewed. Even were I desirous of becoming an infidel, may the Lord be between us and harm, I could never

persuade myself to imbibe those putrid waters. I certainly did read a little in each, at Raphael's earnest desire, but it was only to turn with loathing and nausea away from the fetid odors, and to long with gasping intensity for the pure streams and fragrant fountains that I had so unfortunately shunned.

"This was a source of great uneasiness to Raphael, and a principal reason why he treated me with such disregard. Happily, I discovered a Following of Christ packed away in a corner of my carpet-bag; with it I commenced an attack on Raphael's favorite unbelief. He would not suffer this, and gently asking for the book, I unsuspiciously gave it, but what was my indignant surprise when he coolly held it over the flames, and, before I had time to interfere for its rescue, flung it into the heart of the fire. I stormed a little and wept, but he frostily assured me that he had no idea of harboring such nonsense in *his* house. And matters stood thus a month after Betty's departure. November was drearily advancing, but its dismal loneliness and sorrowful decay were nothing to the loneliness and darkness in my heart. The signs and tokens of approaching winter had no terrors for me. I was worked into a pitch of wretchedness, and nursed a vague suspicion that it would be a relief to die. Death, I argued, was preferable to this frightful solitude; but the lofty voice of Faith rose out of the dark ruin of my conscience, and sternly demanded what could I expect from death? I shuddered, and wished for it no more.

"Perhaps it was compassion for my evident sufferings that again attracted Raphael. He soon became as affectionate as formerly; condemned himself most unsparingly, and with all the tender attention in the world endeavored to restore me to myself. From first to last I was never proof against his sallies of affection, and so I became as buoyant and confiding as of yore.

"Whenever he was in extra good humor he infallibly played, and when I would see him thus fired up with the wild genius within, I felt a superior pleasure in the acknowledgment that I was his slave. After executing a splendid cavatina one frigid evening, he took his seat by my side:

"'Mariette,' he said 'you are sad.'

"I assured him of the contrary.

"'You are lonesome.'

"'Not,' I answered, 'as long as you continue like yourself.'

"'I have taken a disgust to the country.'

"I regarded him with blank surprise.

"'We could not survive this winter here,' he added with a confirmatory smile.

'"Where, then, shall we go?' I demanded; 'I hope you have no intention of returning to the city again?'

"But he told me that he had, and I objected vehemently.

"Would he take me back to my former companions, to become an object of scorn and contempt?

"He looked wounded and sorrowful; a sudden compunction seized me, and flinging my arms round his neck, I begged him to forget what I had said.

"He seemed relieved.

"'Mariette,' he answered, 'your words implied that your connection with me debased you.'

"I hastened to assure him that no such odious idea had ever entered my dutiful mind.

"'Then why do you object,' he asked, 'to leave this awful wilderness, which will be doubly uncomfortable as soon as the winter sets in?'

"I replied that my objections had vanished; I was ready to do his will. He lavished caresses and commendations on me, till I began to consider that I was more fortunate than the common run.

"'What,' I exclaimed, triumphantly, 'do *I* care for the frowns of the powerful? Irma told me that they were all miserable, because none of them loved, and I am happy indeed.'

"This pleased him, and he revealed his plans.

"'I have been brooding,' he said, 'over my chances of obtaining an engagement from the manager of the Opera Hall. The difficulty is, that my name is a stranger to the multitude; but ought not this circumstance incline the balance in my favor? I will play and sing for him at any rate, and fearlessly bide the consequences. And if I am received as I ought to be, Mariette, what then do you think I will do?'

"After guessing all sorts of improbabilities, I very reluctantly gave up.

"'Why, we will go to Europe, and spend the sunniest life that it is ever possible to conceive.'

"You know, dear Ella, that with all my levity, there is a vein of sense running through my composition, so I properly objected to this shadowy plot, as no more than a beautiful dream.

"But he silenced opposition by vividly describing his future successes, the heaps of money he intended to amass, and having amassed them, he added, what more natural than that I should spend them like a prince?

"This was a telling climax, and he knew it by my eye.

"Our only difficulty was about the disposal of our woodland dwelling. We held a grand council on this momentous question, and, in the absence of purchasers, we resolved to abandon it to its fate. I also moved that we should leave his rubbish of books behind us, which unwelcome proposition almost occasioned a serious rupture.

"On a clear, frosty morning, towards the middle of November, the wagon that was to convey ourselves and chattels stopped cheerily before the door. We were pretty well supplied with money, for Betty Carey had given me a purse from my mother immediately upon her arrival, and the dear, generous soul left her own, unknown to us, when she set out again.

"Raphael was all joy during our cityward journey—all joy and anticipation. The manager of the opera corps received him gladly on the terms that himself proposed; he saw his peculiar merits at a glance, and he knew that the bait would take. Raphael procured respectable lodgings in a respectable quarter, and was soon so intensely occupied in studying and practicing, that I was necessarily left greatly to myself. Then a longing desire came over me to revisit my childhood's home, but I dared not do it openly. I would steal out in the dim twilight, wrapt up in a great cloak, and veiled closely, and pass and repass before the paternal door. I would linger under the windows to catch, if possible, the sweet, familiar voices of the beloved within; and sometimes, Ellie, I would fancy I saw my pensive mother, and my noble father, forming the center of a sorrowful group. Raphael disapproved of these stealthy excursions, but I persevered. The people were fascinated with his performances and his magnificent voice; his successes exceeded his wildest expectations, literally, he reaped a harvest of gold. So jubilant was he on his return from the entertainments, that he did not notice my melancholy moods. I had time and oppor-

tunity for reflection and repentance, for during the day, he was so busily engaged, that he did not remark whether I was in or out. If his meals were regularly served, he was in a model humor."

"And tell me, Mariette, how did *you* succeed in the culinary department? I do confess to an honorable curiosity on that delicate point."

"To be candid with you, I was woefully awkward in the beginning. Great white blisters coated the palms of my hands when I swept or did manual labor, and as for the cooking! how it was conducted I leave you to conceive. However, I will say, that I do not understand how we managed to support our lives. We were not like the regular farm settlers who were blessed with an abundance of crops; we depended solely on our distant neighbors for necessary supplies; and when the supplies arrived, there I stood in bewildered astonishment, contemplating them with vexed surprise. In fact, the dreadful truth that I was a bona fide housekeeper only then flashed upon my mind. I moaned mentally, and concluded I had mistaken my vocation, but notwithstanding, I endeavored to make the best of the worst. I essayed a pie one morning, Ellie, but came off with scorched wrists, and burned fingers. My next attempt was less ambitious, but equally disastrous. Raphael perceiving my despairing perplexity, compassionately set to work to teach me how to cook. Having been his own housekeeper for a number of years previously, he was qualified to be my instructer, and under his able wardenship, I was assured that I rapidly progressed.

Ella Rivali smiled solemnly as the grotesque picture presented itself to her mind.

"But to return to my story. These stolen visits were the parents of indescribable sensations, just as if my heart were the prey of two vultures tearing in opposite directions. Strange as it may appear, dear Ellie, these conflicting emotions dragged me to the church, and finally to the sacred confessional. Good Father Beechinor remembered me when I told my sorrowful tale, and his saintly advices are treasured in my memory still.

"He encouraged me to seek a reconciliation with my parents, as I never could have an easy conscience with the weight of their displeasure on my head. I was of the same opinion; and summoning all my courage, I was ushered into my mother's room one frosty afternoon. Without mentioning

all that I did and said, I will tell you how I was received—like another prodigal, with caresses and with joy. I was overpowered with a humiliated bliss. Betty Carey and the children were sent for, and I felt as if the past was a frightful unreality, in all save that my heart yet ached for Raphael, the author of my woes. The only drawback was my father's absence, and when I questioned about him, their tardy answers led me to expect that I had nothing to hope. In fact my mother admitted that my name was a forbidden topic, and that since Betty's return, he was more sternly inclined than before. I informed them of Raphael's brilliant successes, and said we were going to Europe, but my mother entreated me not to give ear to such a desperately untenable scheme. To go to Europe, was to be ruined! And I promised her to dissuade him if it was in my power.

"Raphael was highly indignant at my protracted absence, and rather snappishly demanded the wherefore and the why. I innocently related the interview with my mother, but he was mortally scandalized at my want of becoming decorum. He did not care about cultivating the acquaintance of my family, and requested me not to call at *home* again. I reasoned, and he reasoned, but neither convinced the other, so he determined to settle the matter by the 'inexorable logic of a fact.'

"'Mariette,' said he, 'you are obstinate, and your obstinacy will bring me to disgrace. You know that your parents look down on me, and, although they may forgive you, they will never acknowledge me. This is the second week of my engagement, and the proprietors have kindly consented to set apart to-morrow evening for my benefit, and with it the engagement closes at my own request. To put a stop to further unpleasantness, Mariette, we will take passage the following day.'

"I was perfectly dumb-founded; I represented to him that we were in the middle of December; the prospect of a stormy voyage, and twenty-one startling things, but all was of no avail. I was to witness his triumph on the evening of his benefit and appear in the hight of the fashion, so the entire day was hopelessly taken up in purchasing notions and arranging my dress. The seeds of vanity were not burned out of my composition yet, and I felt not a little proud of my exterior, as I was handed into the carriage by one of Raphael's artistic friends. The hall was crowded to excess

and the audience were genuinely enthusiastic. I thought of Apollo, Orpheus, the Muses, the Graces, the handsome Alcibiades, and of every thing beautiful and poetical that ever I studied or knew, when Raphael came forward on the stage. And to my imagination he surpassed them all. He looked so noble in his antiquely elegant costume; his dark, glossy curls were so tastefully disposed, and his marble, white countenance seemed to be irradiated by the light from his mellow eyes. Moreover he glanced at me and smiled; I was in rhapsodies, and late that evening I gave vent to all my admiration and regard. I became suddenly as anxious as himself to try our fortune in Europe. A great golden mist blinded our glorious future, and as for the past—we tacitly let it glide.

"Our destination was Italy. Raphael was bent upon Italy. And I unhesitatingly seconded his plans. 'Certainly,' I voted, 'Italy is the mother of the arts, and she will receive you, Raphael, as a favorite child.'"

"You pause, dear Mariette," said Ella in a gentle tone, "no doubt your visions were not realized, but behind the curtain we must notice the hand of God."

"You say truly, Ella, they were hollow dreams, but God was merciful to us. We arrived with the new year in Florence, to find, alas, that there was unemployed talent at home equal, if not superior, to Raphael's. He grew exceedingly despondent, but not in the least unkind; on the contrary, he made me the repository of his secret thoughts, the sharer of his sorrows and his joys. He composed an entire opera, but failed to effect a sale, and I have it now in my trunk, together with a pile of poems which he occasionally dashed off under the pressure of varying emotions."

Mariette went over to her trunk, and taking forth a manuscript, returned with it in her hand. "One evening in particular, Ella, Raphael was unusually sad. He sat over against the writing-desk, lead-pencil in hand, his melancholy eye resting in dreary space. Quietly walking up to him I kissed his pallid cheek and jocularly asked if an elegy was the burden of his thoughts?"

"'Something like it, I believe,' he answered with a ghastly smile, 'it is an almost involuntary effusion, for I am thinking of other things than the adornment of my final home.'

"'Let me hear the effusion,' I said, 'before I pronounce an opinion,'—and he read to me, Ella, some verses to which I invite your attention."

PASSING THOUGHTS.

When I am gone to the silent vale
That opes from the court of death;
When the eye is dim, and the cheek is pale,
And the brow is heavy set;
Oh! who will mourn, with the funeral wail,
The unhappy sleeper's fate?

Who will plant the myrtle above my grave
And see that the rose die not,
Who will teach the graceful lily to wave
O'er that dark, mysterious spot?
Will the weeping boughs of the willow lave
The mound where I lie forgot?

I will pass away like a breath of air
O'er a smooth and silvery sea;
Like a transient cloud in the summer fair,
Or grass on the waving lea:
And fame, my fame, which, with treasured care
I kept, will expire with me.

Ah! what is life but a mocking dream,
A dream of feverish haste—
We grasp at a shadow and foolishly deem
That of sweetest joys we taste.
But the shadow melts in the dim unseen—
We are left in a weary waste.

"I regard this poem as sacred, Ella, on account of the consequences that followed it; and although he has written many superior in literary merit, this will ever be my favorite piece.

"After its conclusion he silently awaited my judgment, but I dubiously shook my head, and found fault that its sentiments were not consistent with the tenor of his belief.

"'In the first two lines,' I objected, 'you admit that there is a hereafter—how can you reconcile that with your avowed infidelity and your maxim that death is the end of man.'

"'Isn't it strange,' he indirectly answered, 'that as long as we are living together you never inquired about my antecedents, parentage, or friends? Now, dear Mariette, for your most unwomanly forbearance, I shall favor you with a history of my life.'

"Expressing an ardent desire to hear it, I thrust myself into a comfortable position by his side.

"'Perhaps,' he continued, 'you have already asked yourself why I selected Florence as my residence in preference to so many other cities equally inviting, and some, doubtless,

more agreeable to our tastes? The reason is that Florence is my native place.'

"'Raphael! I ejaculated with the deepest surprise.

"'My father was an Englishman who obtained a situation as Italian correspondent for a London journal, and thus he came to establish "his court" at Florence. He was a brave gay Islander, was Everton Russell, and with his careless, ensnaring ways he stole the heart of the Italian Beatrix. My mother died when I was very young—all that I can remember of her are liquid eyes flooded with affection, a beaming face and a loving manner of folding me to her breast. Her decease was a great grief to my father: he flung up his situation and passed over to the Western world in search of distraction and a home. But he found neither: misfortunes never come singly; and after a few years, struggle and agony he, too, died, leaving me a portionless orphan, dependent on the bounty of a few unfeeling friends. Irma's mother was my father's sister, and to her he confided his little Italian boy. As long as good Aunt de Percherere lived I was treated as one of her children. The talent for music, which I inherited from my mother, was assiduously cultivated, and my youthful proficiency commanded universal applause. I believe I was doomed from my birth. My aunt slept the sleep of death when I was in my eleventh summer, and my worthy uncle, deeming he had done more than his duty, turned me adrift on the hostile world, to fight its fierce battles by myself.'

"I wept on Raphael's bosom.

"'Great as were my abilities, nobody needed my services. I had to earn my bread, so I hired myself as errand-boy in a bookseller's shop. I was unfortunately eaten up with the dream of making myself distinguished, and my absent-mindedness and frequent unpunctuality procured my ignominious dismissal. After vainly traversing the city in search of another situation, I despairingly concluded that it would be a glorious thing to die in a quiet corner, and then my wild, untutored spirit would be forever at rest. But as fate would have it, I eventually stumbled on a music-store, and, having given a specimen of my ability, I was employed both to deliver packages, and to delight the customers by my skill. I remained there a long time, till I concluded I was too large for such menial occupations, and with my savings, I determined to start a like business for myself. I commenced

humbly, for my means were limited, but it appeared from the beginning that I had not much trafficking tact. At the end of a year I closed, everybody's debtor, and the creditor of half the people in town. I was reduced to the utmost want, not having wherewith to procure me lodgings. Afterwards I entered into an engagement with a music-publisher, to furnish original music at prices, varying, according to the merits of the work. I wrote day and night, toiled late and early, and yet it would seem that no more than an average of one piece a month was according to the popular taste. Still I lived in hope, believing that the future would reward me. Uncle de Percherere was dead: his daughter received me at her house, privately, but refused to acknowledge our consanguinity. I felt deeply hurt, but as our opinions agreed on many important points, and as I had no friendly companions, I visited her, from time to time, in a quiet, cousinly way. It was she who introduced us, Mariette,—and now you have the history of an aimless, useless life.'

"And then I asked him a question:

"'Raphael,' said I, 'how is it possible that you, with your warm temperament, your love of the beautiful, and your longing aspirations after immortal fame, could be impregnated with the horrible doctrine of the atheist? Your mother was a Catholic, and you have a perverted Catholic heart.'

"Had I said this at any other time, he would have scowled like a thunder-cloud, but now, with the thought of death upon him, his old prejudices seemed broken up, and he smiled a sorrowful smile, as he answered in a sorrowful way:

"'I scarcely remember my mother—she did not live to teach me, and my father was an English free-thinker. He believed that every thing in nature could be accounted for by natural causes; he rejected the idea of a God or a hereafter, and carefully brought me up in the same comprehensive creed. Hostile to every religion, his animosity was principally directed against the Catholic Church. He taught me to consider its priests as the most accomplished imposters in the universe, and its people as the most pitiable dupes to be found. He put the works of modern infidels and skeptics in my hands as soon as I was able to read. The de Perchereres were as infidel as my father, but the females of the family, to save appearances, attached themselves to the Universalist Church. It is not reputable for women to hold

themselves aloof from congregations, but I maintain that this abominable hypocrisy is worse than the most ridiculous belief. My maxim is—live decently according to acknowledged convictions.'

"'Why, then, dear Raphael,' I questioned, 'have you so persistently interfered with my convictions? You have taken practical ground against the motto you say you prize.'

"'Not in the least,' he answered. 'I held—you know I have not interfered latterly—that your reason was not convinced; that it *could* not be convinced with your wildly improbable theories; therefore, Mariette, I set to work to combat your false belief.'

"'You are really tolerant, Raphael,' I responded, for somehow I began to see that I could argue with him if I choose —'and did you suppose that by drawing me away from the fervent faith of the Catholic, that you would better my condition? Would it make me happy to think that patient suffering brought no reward? Then why not grumble the livelong day, and spend my time in repining? It would be more congenial to my peevish disposition. If you could prevail on me to believe that death is the end of man, what principle is there to keep me back from whatever may please my whims? I would naturally take up the code of the Epicureans and revel in pleasure, while I might—you understand, Raphael, there would be no hereafter, and the *means* would not matter a jot.'

"'But we owe it to society that we should keep within reasonable limits, and do nothing that would be disgraceful,' he maintained.

"'Then why not make a virtue of necessity,' I answered, 'and be virtuous to be eternally rewarded? If we came into the world by chance, and will take our exit from it like an animal, the least we can do is have our own way untrammeled by society's demands. If we reject the voice of God, it is not clear to me that we should obey the commands of man.'

"Well, Ellie, poor Raphael's courage and spirits were rapidly sinking. Consumption was long at its work, and the sea-voyage had hastened the crisis of his disease. He knew that he must die, and I knew it. In the midst of our anxiety and misery, this poor little wanderer was born, and I had it baptized, with Raphael's consent, in the magnificent Baptistery of Florence. The thought of parting with Mary

Beatrix and me, for all *eternity*, overwhelmed Raphael with grief. He loved the child with a concentrated intensity of affection that almost amounted to distraction. I prayed unceasingly for his conversion. Every thing sank into utter insignificance, except the idea that, under God, I might be the means of saving his immortal soul. I buried thoughts of self, thoughts of Beatrix. His salvation was the loadstone of my desires—perish all else, even Mary Beatrix, for she would go to Heaven, if Raphael might be saved. And my unworthy petitions were granted. Jesus touched Raphael's heart, and the seraphic change that instantly took place makes me yet bow my head in an astonishment of awe.

"When I had explained as well as I could the principal mysteries of religion, we called in one of the good pastors of Santa Croce, and under his saintly cultivation, the desert soul of my Raphael began to bloom like the rose. Oh! the beautiful change! I knew his mother prayed for him. He glowed like a furnace of love; the morbid fear of death was turned into a sweet desire of being united in Heaven with Jesus, and he entertained a cheering presentiment that we would join him soon. He cautioned me strictly to cherish this tender blossom, our little Beatrix, as a bud transplanted from Paradise, and the idea of a speedy reunion in the unchangeable land of the blest, smoothed the few difficulties in his way, and tinctured his cup with bliss. I thought that my heart would burst, Ella, when I considered that every day he was drawing nearer the port; but as I gazed on his calm and lovely countenance, on the tranquil fire that slumbered in his jetty eye, I felt it would be a crying sin to desire to keep him on earth.

"On the 21st of November last, the Feast of the Presentation of our Lady, my Raphael presented himself at the foot of the Father's throne, a purified and beautified spirit. I have struggled since with my sorrow and my poverty till God sent you in my way."

Ella bestowed all the sympathy in her power on her poor, disconsolate friend. The bright little infant, unused to the genial fire, was making hopeless attempts to reach it from her lowly crib, until her disappointed wail, attracted the attention of the seniors, called Ella in a minute to her side.

"She is a Florentine," said the mother, smiling, "and knows that the sight of a fire is not very general in this land. You must have noticed the curious fact, Ella, that each has

his tiny charcoal furnace, and it goes with him wherever he goes."

It was agreed between them, that Richard should be introduced on the morrow, and they parted with real regret that the day was thus far spent.

After much ado and a positive determination to take no refusal, the Rivali's at length prevailed upon Mariette to make her residence with them. Early in March they were to prepare for their homeward voyage. Mariette had no intention of returning to the American shores; she would stay in Italy, and honorably earn a livelihood for herself and her child, which would only be a feeble means of atoning for some of her faults.

But Ella and Richard reasoned with her on the impossibility of such a scheme. In the first place, the language of the peninsula was almost unknown to her; secondly, the Italians were capable and willing to perform their own work.

Her chances of an honest independence in the United States were twenty against one in Italy. She had a decided talent for fancy-work, and if she would locate in Philadelphia, she would receive more employment than she could possibly attend to. To satisfy her, they agreed to accept an indemification as soon as she would be able to earn it, but with a mental reservation to bestow it again in presents on Beatrix and herself.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DISASTER.

The gems were set—the crown was made—
The angel smiled—his work was done:—
My vision through the island stray'd,
But when I turned my guide was gone!
I looked aloft, when lo! enwreath'd,
In silver clouds, I saw him rise:
The crown was in a halo sheath'd
He took it home beyond the skies!

"PAPA! papa!" cried young Louis Grosvenor, rushing like a whirlwind into his father's library, "they are coming!

they are coming! hasten, or Mr. Kensella will be first in the field."

"Why, what is the meaning of this," said Mr. Grosvenor, rising leisurely. "Louis, you are getting strange, like the rest of the world, I believe. Why, my boy, are you in such a hurry as this?"

"Papa," returned the lad reproachfully, "have you forgotten that Richard and Ella were to be here to-day? And there is Mr. Kensella, I am sure he will greet them first."

The parent smiled as the impatient boy slipped his hand under his arm, and led him to the carriage at an allegro pace.

"First come, first served," said Mr. Kensella, laughing heartily, as he noticed Mr. Grosvenor drawing nigh—"the early bird catches——" but before he had time to complete the quotation, Ella was locked in her father's embrace.

Louis appeared a trifle crestfallen as he marked the merry and satisfied twinkles leaping from Mr. Kensella's eye, but he managed to swallow his bitter disappointment when his sister pressed him to her heart. Rivali was welcomed fully as warmly by the mutual friends; and Mariette, in widow's weeds and with downcast gaze, was presented as the joyous girl who had paid them a flying visit some time ago in the fall. The junior Kensellas were like a band of summer butterflies, fluttering in innocent glee from one member of the family to another, with the exception, however, of the rising Thomas More, who had scorned to exhibit such volatile symptoms of regard.

"Come over here, children," he whispered, as soon as the elders seemed lost in absorbing conversation. "Come hither and hear my advice. I want to know if you all left your manners in the nursery this morning, you little ungovernables?" The tiny culprits laughed. "You behave like so many barbarians, so many Hottentots, or Zealanders, and if you do not amend, you will have to go to bed before five."

"What is this?" inquired Mr. Kensella, turning suddenly around and confronting the abashed Thomas More, "are you again constituting yourself master of destinies? I warn you, Tom, to be pretty strictly on your guard—Young America wide awake is apt to find a rival."

"This is really too bad," interrupted Ellie, with mock sincerity, "trying to palm off the imported article for staple manufactory. If Thomas More remembers how he used to

climb the rocks of the Giant's Causeway when he was as 'large as a bee,' and how he used to rifle the eagles' nests on the summits of the romantic mountains of Glengariff, it is hardly fair, I infer, that he should be branded as a scion of this land of rivers."

Mariette laughingly demanded an explanation of the enigma, whereupon Richard Rivali gave a description of the various accomplishments possessed by, or attributed to, the miniature prodigy Thomas. He was in fact a curious boy, quite the reverse of his play-fellow Louis Grosvenor. The latter was a sedate, reflective little chap, who generally avoided the society of frolicsome youths, and spent his spare moments in reading or in dreamy thought. Thomas More Kensella never lost a minute of recreation in studying. His chief happiness was to command the movements of a volunteer corps of companions, or gather them around him to listen to his imaginary exploits. He was not scrupulously diligent, but his memory was excellent, and he possessed an uncommon facility for supplying gaps in his lessons by original interpolations. Ambition was a prominent feature of his character. He confidentially informed a few selected friends, that he would begin his flight low, but soar in time to the dizzy pinnacle of fame.

On the following day the doors of Grosvenor Hall were joyously flung open. The high old chambers reëchoed once more Ella's familiar voice; superannuated domestics came thronging to rewelcome their mistress, and Mr. Grosvenor was in a happy, genial mood. Changes had crept into the family circle—true—but changes are inevitable. Neither wealth, nor talent, nor might can oppose the decrees of the Almighty. They flew from room to room as if to the embrace of former friends, and visited the gardens and the arbors. Each familiar spot was consecrated by sweet recollections, each tiny, sheltered nook recalled some memory of the past.

With the assistance of Ella, Mariette succeeded in finding a neat white cottage which exactly answered her purposes. It contained three cheerful apartments, had a grassy plot in front, and an abundance of beautiful creepers running riot over the roof of the house. Besides, it was in the heart of the city, and the rent was decidedly low. And then she was well patronized, for, besides being a master-hand at ornamental needle work, her modest demeanor and superior

manners attracted many who would otherwise have left their custom in more pretentious stores. Her child was growing up bright, hearty, and mischievous; she had already taken lessons in lisping, but notwithstanding, a heavy gloom hung over the mother's heart. Could she only obtain her father's forgiveness, she thought she would again know peace.

It was August. The lengthy twilight of the eve of the Assumption ran its lightsome shadow over the river and the hills as Mariette was sitting pensively inside her cottage door. Mary Beatrix was enjoying an infant's placid slumber, and as the mother's anxious gaze rested on its innocent features, she cast an involuntary glance into the clouded future. "Oh!" she murmured, "if this child grew up and treated *me* as I have treated my parents—my God! how just but how terrible the retribution!" She paused in an agony of apprehensiveness, as her vivid fancy blackened the distracting picture, and when her thoughts had colored it to an appalling degree, she cast herself on her knees, and implored the Blessed Virgin to shield the child under the wings of her love. The prayer brought relief to her burdened conscience; the purple flush of excitement gave way before her natural hue, and the thick, labored breathing was succeeded by a free respiration. Springing suddenly from her posture of supplication, she went directly to the writing-desk, and drawing forth pen, ink and paper, she whispered, "It must be done—this instant I will write to my father!" Her hand trembled as she penned the first few lines, but it became steadier as she proceeded. When completed her letter read thus:—

"My Justly Indignant Father:

"The offending one has suffered—she found her punishment here—she has drained the cup of bitterness and remorse—she is a widow with an only child. Can you yet forgive her? She is a lone and weary wanderer; strangers keep watch over her pillow when sickness confines her to her couch. Father, when you know that the angel of retribution has poured his red vial on my head, when you are aware that justice has brandished his exterminating sword, when you are told that the thorn of agony festers in your daughter's soul, will you still withhold your forgiveness?

"I do not ask to recover that place in your affections which I have forever forfeited—I do not purpose to return

to the home where I was born and bred—all I demand is *forgiveness*. Welcome penury, contempt, and a nameless grave, with the sweet assurance that no bitter recollections of the past linger in the souls of my parents. I will cheerfully drag out an unknown existence, when confident that you pity the erring one, and pardon her black offense. I am tortured with forebodings and terrible doubts. Write, my father, and say that you do forgive—peace may then perhaps return to the sorrowed heart of your unworthy daughter. MARIETTE RUSSELL.

She read it over twice, sealed it with nervous haste, and scribbled the directions with unsteady speed. Casting a fond glance on the unconscious infant, and snatching a hurried kiss, she threw her shawl over her shoulders, and started to go to the post-office. It was scarcely six squares from her dwelling, yet who can penetrate the designs of an Infinite God? When she returned her little homestead was in a blaze. The alarm bells were sounded just as she deposited the missive, but, without the slightest apprehension, she leisurely retreaded her course. What was her consternation, her agony, her frantic apprehensions, when the appalling spectacle burst upon her view? "My child, my child," escaped from her livid lips in tones of rending anguish, and before any body present could begin to conceive her intentions, she madly plunged through the angry flames and into the room where her sleeping daughter lay. One wild ejaculation of thanksgiving and again she bounded out, bearing the frightened, but otherwise uninjured babe, securely in her grasp. Crowds of sympathizing witnesses clustered around to offer their congratulations, but the shock she received was too great; she fainted, and it required the benevolent assistance of some good Samaritans to recall her to the realities of life.

Not an article of her furniture was rescued. The devouring tongues of the fire demanded all within the shell-like cottage to appease the wrath of their destructive appetite, and Mariette was thrown again upon the charity of her untiring friends. How the fire originated was never satisfactorily ascertained. It could hardly result from negligence, for she was unconscious of having left any combustible matter in the vicinity of the stove, and the idea that it was the work of an incendiary was infeasible in the extreme.

"Would you be so kind as to lead me to the residence of

Mr. Kensella?" asked Mariette, of an elderly woman who was anxiously scrutinizing her face. But the question only called forth an exclamation of the deepest astonishment and a prolonged interjection, with a forcible, "Wall neow! who would ha' ever thought that you was the critter yeourself!"

Mariette was nonplussed until the goodly dame brought home to her memory some incidents of her forest life. She was no other than the native pioneer at whose humble mansion Betty Carey had been so very hospitably entertained, and who was now on a visit to Philadelphia to console the [illegible] moments of an expiring sister. "And it is rally yer-[illegible]! I don't know nothing about the residence of Mr. Kingshella, seein' as how I'm a stranger in these regions myself. But it takes me greatly to see *yeou* in these furin' parts. Du tell how yeou ha' bin since I ha' seed yeou last!"

"Well, thank God," answered Mariette shortly, for she was extremely desirous of retiring from the disastrous scene. "I would be most happy to meet you at a more favorable moment, but I am weak and exhausted now; I trust, however, that yourself and your family are well."

"Wall yaas!" was the satisfied rejoinder, "all very wall 'cept Zechiel. He kotched a cold last winter, an' somehow he never got over it yit. There's my little gerl Suz Mandy, why she's growd quite big, and poor nabor Zebedy, he's lost his yearling colt."

This rare intelligence was communicated with the keenest interest imaginable, and not over hurriedly either, for the good woman breathed freely after the enunciation of every word. Fortunately for Mariette, Thomas More Kensella was among the number of those who had hastened to the rescue of the cottage. He immediately espied her, and manfully proposed to conduct her on the instant to his house. The offer was gladly accepted, and bidding adieu to her quondam acquaintance, she thitherward bent her steps.

During prayer that night she thought of the coming morrow, the Feast of the Assumption of the glorious Virgin Mary. "Mother," she murmured, as the tears of devotion trickled down her whitened cheeks, "you too were homeless, and your Divine Son had not whereon to repose his weary head. You are my refuge, my supporter. Oh! stay with me, 'for the evening of life is far spent,' in sorrow and tribulation. Mary, the mariner's moon, the voyager's polar

star, let thy pure beams illuminate the course of my wrecked and stranded barque."

When Ella heard of the accident, her soul was filled with grief. "Alas! poor Mariette," she exclaimed, "bitter indeed has been the fruit of your repentance."

"Now," said she on the following day, accosting the patient sufferer, "I will hear of no excuse. You must accompany me home to-night, and remain with me if it were only for a couple of months. I assure you I sometimes feel very lonesome when Papa and Richard are away, so you see that selfishness has a part in my request. No apologies, Mariette, I will not be gainsayed."

Mariette consented to "trouble her" until she could succeed in reëstablishing herself again,

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CHAPTER XXII.

FINALE.

Mr. Austin received his daughter's letter while sitting one evening in the parlor, and looking on the waves of crimson clouds that undulated in the western sky. He perused its contents with a countenance betraying his emotions. Anon, the stern expression would fade from his softened eye, and the beholder would fondly imagine that parental affection was triumphing over slighted authority, but the delusion was of short duration; in a moment numerous wrinkles would cut deep into his massive forehead, and his proud, scornful lips would curl with a disdainful smile.

"Well," he soliloquized bitterly, "may she style herself an unworthy child, but she should have added that she was also disobedient. I wonder what does she mean about the exterminating sword? Perhaps it is a poetical allusion to the death of her unfortunate husband. Any way, I never knew a woman yet that could pen a few sensible lines. If they can at all, they are bound to give flowers of rhetoric. She thought this would be highly effective, but I declare she was mightily mistaken. She brought down her misery on herself, setting warnings and threats at defiance."

Mr. Austin leaned back in the sociable, and was silent for a considerable time. Almost imperceptibly the acidity was abstracted from his expression, his great brow unclouded, and a faint, relenting smile parted his compressed lips.

"Poor Mariette," he muttered, somewhat sorrowfuly, "she has suffered her share of life's ills. What advantage will I gain by refusing her pardon? Will it make me a worthier man, or satisfy an upbraiding conscience? I would like to see my little grandchild. Nonsense! what did I say!! I believe, however, we were rather cruel to that Russell. He was poor and sickly—but, without going into the merits of the case, I must consult my wife—I will follow Amy's advice."

Striding into the retired nursery, he placed the epistle in Mrs. Austin's hand. Recognizing the familiar writing, she read it with a palpitating heart, while the bright, unwilling tears forced themselves up from the fountains of her maternal love. To avoid the observation of the children, she accompanied Mr. Austin into a neighboring room.

"Well, Laurence," she said, in answer to his questioning glances, "what is your final decision? For a long time past I have been haunted with terrible day-dreams, and I knew, without being superstitious, that they boded no good. You will recall her instantly, is n't it! A widow with an only child! Oh! let her speedily return! As we can not exonerate ourselves from blame, Laurence, it is only just that we should make amends."

"I will be guided by you, Amy," he responded in a soothing tone, "your instincts are better than mine, and may be more safely followed. Although she has offended us mortally, she has suffered bitterly, and she is our daughter still. I will go to the library immediately, and forward her a favorable reply."

"Do not, I beseech you, neglect to urge her to return home; our arms are open to receive her. And please, Laurence, to send me Betty Carey until I acquaint her with these facts."

"We have heard from poor Mariette, Betty," said Mrs. Austin, as the hearty Irishwoman approached modestly, hiding her dough-encrusted hands under her snowy apron.

"O thin, glory be to God," she returned, devoutly dropping on her knees, "but this is the joyful intilligence. An tell me, achree, Mrs. Austin, is mavourneen happy an well?"

she looked with an earnest, hopeful look into Mrs. Austin's face.

"She is a widow, Betty, and has an only child."

"Betty listened with clasped hands, and a countenance of bewildered astonishment.

"A widdy!" she huskily repeated. An tell me, asthore, was her fine young husband cut off in the prime of his life? Ochone! Ochone! May God be wid ye in yer trouble, Miss Ettie, achree, and lighten the load of yer cross. An is she near us at all, Mrs. Austin, or did she go over the says?"

"She is now in Philadelphia, in probable distress, and Mr. Austin is writing to recall her."

The latter information overpowered poor Betty with joy. The tears gushed out from her honest heart, as she returned her simple thanks, and entreated the Almighty to spare her until "Miss Ettie" would return to her home.

"Biddy O'Brady, acushla," exclaimed Betty, in delighted accents, as, arrayed in her Sunday regalia, she rushed into a kitchen in the rear. "Biddy, acushla, clap on yer bonnet, an come down with me this minit to the priest's. Shure we received famous noos. Is n't it herself, the darlint, that's going to come back to the house."

"Why thin now, an who are you manin at all?" demanded Biddy, in amazement. "An are you for luggim *me* afther you down to Father Beechinor's house? You'r the curious woman entirely, and me in the wash tub to-day."

"Yes, Biddy, they got a lether yestherday evening, an the craythur, it seems, is in disthress. But Mr. Austin, God bless him, wrote back to her to come home, where she's as welcome as the flowers of May."

Mrs. O'Brady immediately commenced the preparations of the toilet, in which she was ably assisted by Betty.

"Good morrow, yer Riverence," said Betty, when she was admitted into the pastor's room; "and may be yer Riverence remimbers Miss Austin, be the same token that she was married to the Prodesdan."

"You are full of your subject, Mrs. Carey, but I see you are hearty and strong. Yes, I remember Miss Austin. Have you heard from her of late? She had very good dispositions, but she was unfortunately too easily influenced."

Betty, with the greatest gusto, related the glad information, not forgetting to add that she was sure she attended her duty. The priest listened patiently to her tale, but

abstained from expressing an opinion. In the course of the conversation he inquired of Mrs. O'Brady how the young Immigrants fared?

"Faix thin, yer Riverence, tis gloriously they're getting along. Patsey, may God be good to him, is the finest carpenter you'd meet in a long day's thravel, an besides that, he's as innocent as the unborn babe. Mag is a nate hand at the needle; she is airning an imminsity of money, and sinds the most of it home to her good old father and mother. An as for Joney, she is doin dashin work wid a farmer. She had no taste for the city, yer Riverence, an bein always used to the counthry, she hired out, a few miles beyond here, to attind to the dairy work. There's talk of her bein married to a lashin young fellow who has a good farm of land. He is an iligant Irishman, an very studdy wid that, at all events it would be an even match."

"The teachers inform me that your children are improving rapidly, and besides that, are the models for their respective schools."

"Oh! thin, thanks to yerself, yer Riverence, for that same. Shure twas you, may the Heavens reward you, that tould the craythures how to behave themselves, an larned thim their catechisms an the rudeyments of all they knows."

After this grateful acknowledgment, they spoke of divers matters, and when the twain were taking their departure, Betty voluntarily promised to lead Mrs. Russell to Father Beechinor the moment she would arrive.

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"The sweetest intelligence from Arthur, Mariette," cried Ella, rushing into her room, and delightedly brandishing a letter; "you may read it—every word. I assure you it is perfectly exhilarating."

"Ah! Ellie," said Mariette, sadly, "although it is more than a month since I have written, I have received no answer from home. Perhaps, alas! my father is inexorable still."

She perused the document handed by her friend with pleasure in every lineament.

"How," inquired Ella, as she carefully refolded the letter, "do you like its tone and spirit? He is an embryo-missionary already; you will not deny that he is a saint."

Mariette Russell smiled.

"Yes Ellie," she responded, "Arthur is a blaze of zeal. But the idea of spending his life among the Indians, is it not

rather strange? In a crowded and popular city his eloquence and exemplary piety might win numberless souls to the Fold, while others, less gifted in the natural order, might labor advantageously for the salvation of the forest's sons."

"Let him hearken to the voice of his conscience," answered Ella, while her dark eyes flashed with a noble pride; "If it commands him to live for the sake of the despised and hunted Red Man, let him find a holy joy in leading these unsophisticated ones to God. Oh! Arthur Grosvenor, may Jesus assist you in maturing these illustrious designs! Well may your father be proud of the span of your intellect, and well may your sister regard you with reverence and unspeakable awe."

"You are right, dearest Ellie," answered Mariette, "but my spirit is broken, and my vision is dim. Time was when such unselfishness were glorious in my estimation—when I would have thought your generous brother deserving of the wildest admiration and esteem. But the cold world has laid its chilly hand upon me, and alas!—I am so changed!"

"Just look at the elfish Beatrix awakened from an angel's dream," exclaimed Ella, with gentle animation. The conversation had taken a sorrowful turn and she wished to direct it back into a joyful course. "Is n't there a mine of intelligence in her dusky southern eye! Come, little Mary Beatrix, we are in for a beautiful romp!"

The child attempted to rise from its cradle in compliance with the pleasurable request; Ella snatched her up in her arms and cast a glance of triumph at the mother, who was sitting near.

"You are really formidable, Ellie," said Mariette, with a genial laugh as she patted the baby's cheek; "I have serious doubts whether she would as readily come to me."

"We are off for the riverward arbor," suggested Ella, in an intimidating voice; "Mary Beatrix and I are going to see who will be victor. Mariette, prepare—we are going—we are going—we are—gone"—and away she flew through the halls and corridors, into the open garden and down through the winding paths. Mariette, once as light as the free gazelle, followed rather leisurely, smiling soberly anon, at Ella's childish zest.

"Now, you little fairy," said Ella, exultingly, as the delighted Beatrix commenced pulling at her streaming curls; "as you are an incontestable conqueror, that is, as nobody can

dispute your title to that name, I am straightway determined to lay you on a bed of vines," and she deposited her gleesome burden on a grassy, tendril-covered mound.

"I remember the time, my dear Ettie," she continued, as Mariette arrived at the trysting, "that I would n't even dream of contending with *you* in a race, and now we have beaten you brown! Sit over here, if you please—the prospect is unmistakably magnificent."

It was the identical arbor in which Rivali had so delicately revealed his love.

"A romantic trio, really," exclaimed Richard, unexpectedly standing before them; "but I knew it was in some such a nook as this that I would be likely to find the schoolmates."

"Is n't Richard problematically deep?" asked his wife, with a musical laugh. "He sincerely thinks that his last hint is worth a mine of golden ore. Would n't you join us in our sylvan retirement," she added, shaking her jetty ringlets and looking him archly in the face. "I think we can manage to accommodate you with a couple of feet of room."

"You are invariably obliging, dearest Ella," answered Richard, gazing fondly on her joy-lit countenacne, and seating himself by her side; "but I did not come hither empty-handed. I am the bearer of —— who guesses what?"

"Tennyson's latest?" "A toy for the baby?" "A paper of sweet-meats?" "Bulwer's or Dickens' last?"

"Why, that shower is enough to storm any sinner's confidence," replied he, sagely and pleasantly," but it unfortunately happens that neither of you struck the mark. I have a letter for Mrs. Russel, the veriest truant that ever found place in a mail. It is directed, you perceive, to the little house that was burned. The carrier, discovering no trace of the owner, returned it to the post-office, and this is the third time that it has been advertised. By the merest chance today I ran over the ladies' list, and seeing the name, I immediately released it for you."

Mariette received the straying messenger with brimming eye and eager grasp. Seizing the child in her arms, "excuse my presence, my benefactors," she murmured, "but oh! this letter is from home."

Hastily she sped over the verdant pathways into her secluded room and, with a wildly palpitating heart devoured the epistle's contents. "My God, I thank thee!" she fervently ejaculated, after drinking in its precious meaning; "this is a

token of reconciliation between Thee and me—a harbinger of peace to my mind. To-morrow I depart, again to seek my father's house."

She resought the Rivali's.

"Read it," she said; "there is hope at length for the despairing, a sheltering harbor for the wrecked."

"You shall not leave us so suddenly, Mariette," answered Ella, when Mariette urged the necessity of departing on the following day. "You would not desert us so soon; or have we done any thing to offend you?" she asked, as the large tears gathered in her eyes and she affectionately laid her hand on her companion's shoulder.

"Oh! Ellie, for Heaven's sake, do not ask me such a question as that; your kindness has almost been the cause of my ruin. Instead of treating me as a disgraced and unworthy child, you have looked upon me as the friend of your girlhood: you have snatched me from the jaws of famine and supplied me, not only with the necessities, but also with the luxuries of life. When the proud, cold world passed a fallen idol unheedingly, *you* remembered the friendship of other days, and in the arms of your Christian charity embraced one who merited more than she suffered. Mr. Rivali," she continued, abruptly turning to Richard, "you have found a jewel more precious than diamonds and all the Orient's wealth. You are worthy of your fortune, but carefully treasure your gem. God and man will bless you, and there is one broken-hearted who will nightly pray for your prosperity and success.

Ella grasped the hand of the excited Mariette; Richard stood respectfully silent, a little distance from them both.

"A week—prolong your stay for a week—only for a week, dearest Ettie," pleaded the former, gazing earnestly in her face.

"And permit me to indorse the petition, said Rivali, frankly, the noble expression of his features lighted up with sincere regard.

Mariette, overpowered with emotions, sank for a minute to a seat.

"God," she made answer, "will richly reward your benevolence. I comply, truest, best of friends, with your desire—and listen—my heart is furrowed with the remembrance of your kindly deeds. Yes, furrowed, because I am undeserving; but the oil of Heavenly consolation is now

poured over the yawning wounds. The prayers of the penitent thief were mercifully heeded by Jesus, so, I trust, will be those of the no less guilty Mariette Russell.

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The variegated thread of five years was spun by the weaver Time, into the many-colored texture of the Past. How noiselessly the grim presider operated at his ponderous loom! how ceaselessly he plied his shuttle! Many startling events had happened in that brief period; many a drama had been enacted, many a tragedy closed.

Mariette Russell was slumbering tranquilly by the side of the grand-father who loved her so tenderly and so well. The beatings of her fond but misguided heart were stilled forever in death. Those who gazed upon the chastened beauty of her countenance when she was laid out in her burial shroud, could hardly persuade themselves that the penitent spirit had flown. Her cheeks were pale and pure as the petals of a lily; the eyelids were placidly closed; the rich brown hair clustered shiningly over her temples and face, and her waxen hands were folded cross-wise upon her breast. And they placed in the fingers of Mariette a passion flower, symbolical of the sufferings she underwent.

It looked more like the repose of an innocent infant than the sleep from which nobody wakes.

Mary Beatrix grew up a cherished blossom among her uncles and aunts. She was lovely, was the little Italian, with her olive complexion, her flashing eyes, her jetty ringlets and her graceful form. Her spirit was proud and imperious; but Mr. and Mrs. Austin, from sad experience, knew how to train the shooting vine. Won by the examples and persuasions of their daughter, they began to examine the grounds of the Catholic Faith. Father Bechinor zealously undertook to guide them through the brambles of uncertainty; to lead them to the pasture of the one Good Shepherd, and to introduce them among his united flock. Before Mariette expired, her parents acknowledged themselves children of the infallible Church; their offspring were instructed in its tenets, and she went to her home in eternity with the sweet conviction that her child would be educated in the Faith that the holy Apostles had taught.

Betty Carey spent her happy old age with the converted Austins; her especial favorite and the object of her tenderest love being the engaging Beatrix Russell.

Among the aborigines of the West, a second Francis Xavier was laboring. The Cross of the Crucified was exalted in the occidental wilds, and sanctified manhood by its side was instructing the children of the forest. Like dew on the bosom of the flowers, sank his words of thrilling eloquence on the souls of his rude but fervid hearers. He spoke to them, in their own beautifully figurative manner, of the Great Spirit, who was enthroned in power and glory, "in the land of the hereafter;" of his munificence and tenderness, and how they would reign with him; and of the spotless, potent Virgin, who would love them more than ever mother loved a child. Arthur Grosvenor worked assiduously for the salvation of his American Indians, and he found a super-human happiness in viewing the countless numbers who heard the Word, and believed.

Three little children, the oldest a sunny boy nearly five years old, were joyously sporting on the grounds of Grosvenor Hall. Louis, now a stripling of seventeen, was delightedly watching their maneuvers; almost continually applauding and occasionally joining in their play. They were Arthur, Richard and Ella Rivali, and were doing their tiny utmost to entertain "Uncle Louis" during his summer vacation. Their mother was in the studio, busily engaged in writing—and to whom? if we may inquire. Ah! it was to good Sister Angelique, bidding her make room in a few years more for another Ella, but one, she hoped, that would give her more satisfaction than her unworthy predecessor. Mary Kensella, in religion, Sister Julia, was formally notified in a postscript, that she was convicted of unparalelled neglect; tried by a jury of unprejudiced feelings, was found guilty, and most unanimously condemned; that there was only one way of appeasing the indignant justice of the Court of Friendship, and that was, to answer her last communication immediately, and give every trifling particular relating to her erratic self.

Richard Rivali, happy in his wife and children, was the most celebrated lawyer in Philadelphia. His eloquence was proverbial, his probity and disinterestedness by-words. His ambition was to leave behind him a spotless name, and to be a fitting model of imitation for the little ones whom God had given him to rear.

Mr. Grosvenor and Mr. Kensella continued the warmest friends. The former steadfastly refused to hear an explana-

tion of the "Roman Creed." He would die, he said, in the faith which a long line of ancestors had bequeathed to him, and, up to the period of the closing of our narrative, he kept his youngest son at a strictly Protestant University. Thomas More Kensella was also at school—a Catholic College, successfully cultivating his rare abilities. When his anxious parent questioned him as to the profession he would choose to adopt, he declared that he abhorred the law, detested medicine, and had a wholesome, Christian horror for both the army and navy; and after a modest hesitation, he ventured further to confess that he would leave the professions to themselves.

"Upon my honor," cried his father in astonishment, "but this is pretty open and rather cool. Tell me, you ingenious rascal, do you suppose you will have *me* all your life?"

"Such, sir, is my most pleasing expectation," was the humble and deferential response. "But who can count the roads to Parnassus? What would you say, my dear father, if I turned my thoughts in a literary direction? It is only a hint, you know, and I merely solicit your advice."

"Ha! runs the rabbit in these troublesome quarters. Tom, my boy, you will have more than nuts to crack, for the world is a troublesome customer in that disreputable line. However, persevere, for the acorn grows to the oak." The delight of the good man's heart was visible on his merry countenance, although he sought to conceal it by uttering cautious words.

Father Dominick and Father Beechinor labored faithfully in their respective diocesses, bright but unconscious examples of the religion they professed to teach.

THE END.